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W O R K S

BY THE

REV. JOHN CUMMING, D.D.

Minister of the Scottish National Church, Crown Court,

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OLD TESTAMENT.

BY REV. JOHN CUMMING, D.D., F.R.S.E.,

PRESIDENT OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL CHURCH, CROWN COURT,
COVENT GARDEN.

ILLUSTRATED WITH SEVERAL ENGRAVINGS.

Book of Lebiticus.

LONDON :

JOHN FARQUHAR SHAW,
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1854..



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SABBATH MORNING READINGS

Book of *L*

PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE following very instructive observations are given by Bush, the American commentator, on the nature and import of this book :—

“ Although the Book of Leviticus contains some matters purely historical, yet its leading scope is to record the laws concerning the sacrifices, ordinances, and institutions of that remarkable economy from which it derives its name. The established worship of the Hebrews was offering—not prayer, said or chanted, nor instrumental music, nor any like form of devotion—but the presenting to the Deity certain articles of food and drink. This system of worship is not to be understood as having originated at the time to which the book refers. As there were moral laws in the world, by which human conduct was more or less governed, prior to the delivery of the

Decalogue from Mount Sinai, so it is evident, from the history of Cain and Abel, of Noah, of Abraham, and other patriarchs, that sacrificial offerings are to be dated back to the earliest periods of which we have any account. They constituted the prevailing form in which the spirit of devotion was taught to express itself from the very infancy of the race. But as sacrifices were ordained to enter largely into the dispensation now about to be established, they are in this book instituted, as it were, anew, placed upon their true foundation, and commanded with circumstances which gave them greater importance, and served to illustrate their typical character with more effect.

"The sacrifices prescribed in the Levitical worship were of two kinds: the *bloody* and the *unbloody*; or the *animal* and the *vegetable* offerings; the latter consisting of *fruits* and *libations*.

"(I.) THE BLOODY SACRIFICES.—These consisted, (1.) of *Holocausts*, which were offered to the Lord entire, and were considered as ranking highest in dignity and excellence, for which reason Moses commences the law of sacrifices with them. (2.) *Sin and Trespass-offerings*, distinguished from the holocausts by certain parts only of the animal being burnt on the altar, while the flesh was eaten by the priests. (3.) *Eucharistical Sacrifices*, or *Thank-offerings*. In these the fat only was consumed on the altar, a small portion being allotted by law to the priest, and all the rest being eaten at a solemn and joyful feast by the offerer and his guests.

"(II.) UNBLOODY SACRIFICES, OR MEAT-OFFERINGS.—These consisted of flour, bread, cakes, and ears of

corn and grain roasted, of which a full account is given in ch. ii. The *libations* were of wine, and although the mode of pouring them out is nowhere described, yet it is most likely that the wine was poured out of some vessel upon the top of the altar.

"That these sacrifices had all of them a typical intent; that they were 'shadows of good things to come,' pointing more or less distinctly to 'the body which is of Christ,' the whole Epistle to the Hebrews is a continued proof. The imposition of hands upon the head of the victim, the shedding of its blood, and the consumption of its members upon the altar, were prefigurative acts setting forth, by a kind of dramatic representation, the future offering of the 'Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.' The requisite qualities of these sacrificial victims were emblematical of Christ's immaculate character, and the law of their oblation was a practical hieroglyphic of the great gospel truth of the atonement. So also were the outward washings and purifications, enjoined by the Mosaic law, designed to intimate the necessity of inward purity. Indeed, if these institutions be severed from their New Testament relations, we have no key to unlock the hidden meaning of the Pentateuch, and the whole ritual contained in it dwindleth down to a burdensome round of unmeaning ceremonies. But when regarded in the light now suggested, the whole service, like the veil on the face of Moses, conceals a spiritual radiance under an outward covering, and the wisdom of the various appointments appears at once worthy of its Divine Author. To what extent the spiritual import of these rites was actually understood by the Jews themselves it may

not be easy to determine ; but that something, over and above the simple act of slaying and offering the animal victim, was required by the spirit of the law, is evident from the fact, that the obedience of the chosen people is frequently represented as faulty, notwithstanding their scrupulous observance of the outward rite. Thus Isaiah i. 11, 12 : ‘ To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord : I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.’

“ But while the Jews probably in great measure fell short of apprehending the true typical genius of their own dispensation, and consequently rejected its Divine Fulfiller when he came, an error is often committed on the other hand, in modern times, by the attempt to elicit more from these figurative institutions than they were intended to convey. It by no means follows that, because certain portions of the Levitical economy have a typical purport, we have therefore a right to give loose to imagination and multiply types at will, as if the Scriptures meant all that they can be made to mean. This was the fault of many of the earlier interpreters, who so abounded in mystical senses as to convert nearly the whole system into a mass of fancied allegories and typical allusions, which Luther very properly characterized as the ‘ *froth* of Scripture.’ To such lengths was this style of interpretation carried by Origen, Hesychius, and their disciples in later times, that one can scarcely open a volume of their commentaries without reading in the title-page that the ‘ *mystical sense is duly expounded*;’ evidently implying that the duty of the commentator was by no

means discharged by the accurate grammatical exegesis of the text; but that he was bound in addition to penetrate beyond the surface of the letter, and enlighten his readers by an exhibition of the manifold occult meanings hidden beneath the surface, and constituting those abysmal depths of import, which the plummet of lexicography could never presume to sound.

"It may be difficult, indeed, to lay down precise rules which shall be universally applicable in the way of interpretation, but the grand canon undoubtedly is, to follow strictly the apostolical explanations, where we have them; and, where we have them not, to proceed with extreme caution, adhering rigidly to the analogy of faith, and standing as remote as possible from anything which may appear fanciful, and give occasion to cavillers to discard typical expositions altogether. Under these restrictions we may safely recognise a typical import in many items of the Levitical law which are not *expressly* affirmed by the New Testament writers to be possessed of that character; and, in fact, in no other way will that wondrous polity disclose to us the whole richness of its evangelical implications."

The main design of all these burnt-offerings was no doubt expiatory, while eucharistic and petitionary references were not excluded.

Noah presented burnt-offerings partly as eucharistic. Job accompanied his prayer for his sons with burnt-offerings. David says, "I will go unto thine house with burnt-offerings."

The burnt-offering was specially typical of Christ. So it is stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "When he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and

offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure. Then said I, Lo! I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God."

The offering of the Son of God superseded the cattle on a thousand hills. All the victims and offerings related in this book derive their significance and value from the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER I.

NATURE OF LEVITICUS. DIVINE INSPIRATION OF. FULL OF THE GOSPEL. TYPICAL TEACHING. JESUS IN LEVITICUS. HEATHEN AND JEWISH SACRIFICES. HOLOCAUST. NATURE OF. ANY ONE MIGHT KILL THE VICTIM. A PRIEST ONLY COULD OFFER IT.

WE shall find in the course of our reading of this, the third book in the Pentateuch, some of the most illustrative symbols of the distinctive peculiarities of the blessed Gospel and of the religion of Christ that are found in any part of the whole Bible. Many have been inclined to regard this book as if it were the record of an economy so obsolete that little or no evangelical instruction or profit can be extracted from it now; but this is great mistake and misapprehension: it is the Gospel according to Levi, and speaks of Christ, as the first book in the New Testament is the Gospel according to St. Matthew. It is the Gospel veiled under the shadows and types that remained for a season the vehicles of truth; most of which we can explain, some of which we cannot see the reason of now, but all of which, as instituted by a wise, a glorious, and a good God, we are sure had their end, and were designed to teach his family in their use and their significance.

The book is called by us Leviticus, from the Septuagint translation *λευιτικον*, meaning that which

concerns or relates to the Levites or the ordinances of Levi. All the officers of Israel were called Levites; but some of the Levites were priests, and others of the Levites were not. Many people make a distinction between "priest" and "Levite" which is not always correct. All priests were Levites, but all Levites were not priests. The book is named after the Levite or the Levitical services, sacrifices and rites. We derive its name from the Vulgate, *Leviticus*; but in the Hebrew, and by a Jew, it is not called by that name; it is called *Va-yikra* — the Third Book of Moses, commonly called *Va-yikra*; and the reason that they call it so is from a usage I explained in our readings on Genesis and Exodus. The first words of the chapter are, "And the Lord called unto Moses;" or, as it is strictly in the Hebrew—for "Lord" is put in by our translators—"And He called unto Moses." These words are its Jewish title. But what "He?" The "He" who in the previous chapter, in the form of the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, took up his residence between the cherubim on the mercy-seat, and from that place gave forth responses to the children of Israel.

The time occupied by the transactions recorded in this book is extremely short. It is supposed, from very fair and conclusive calculations, that the whole of it occupied only one month in the desert—the whole of the arrangements were given in the course of one month. That the book was written by Moses, that it is otherwise inspired, is quite plain: first, from the fact that the Jews, whatever were their faults, never failed in any one thing in being the custodiers and guardians of the purity and integrity

of the Sacred Volume. It was left for a corrupt section of the professing church in the West to corrupt the Old Testament by adding the Apocryphal books; the Jews never accepted them. Our blessed Lord rebuked them for making void the Law by tradition; he rebuked them for omitting to keep it; but he never rebuked them for having corrupted it by adding to it, nor subtracting from it. Whatever their sins were, they were not chargeable with the sin of unfaithfulness in the guardianship of the Sacred Oracle. This is also quoted by our Lord in the Gospels; it is quoted in the New Testament as Sacred Scripture, and is expressly and therefore divinely ascribed to Moses.

I have said that this is the Gospel according to Levi. You will find the Gospel in this book only under its peculiar shadows; the difference between it and the Gospel according to St. Matthew is,—this is gold in the mine; the Gospel of St. Matthew is gold bearing the great king's image, and in currency. The one needs to be extracted by one that knows the truth; the other is already taken, and in currency among mankind. I have no doubt that some Jews saw nothing in Leviticus but the sacrifices; just as the Jews at the present day see nothing but the altar—the veil being upon their hearts: but many a Jew, like Simeon and Anna at the advent of our Lord—like David and Isaiah long before—saw Christ in these; or, like Abraham, not only saw him, but rejoiced while they saw him through the sacrifices that foreshadowed him.

It has been supposed, and is, indeed, asserted by most divines, that a type, meaning something which

waits to be filled up, some impression which waits to be illuminated, or symbols, were only meant for the infancy of the church, and that now-a-days we can do without them. But it is a singular difficulty in the way of such a conclusion as this, that nothing is so popular in the present day as what is analogous to a type, the parable, the allegory, the fable, the interesting tale or story; as if there was something in man's constitution that makes truth conveyed in the form of a parable, an allegory, or a fable, more beautiful and acceptable to him. For instance, the most popular book in the English tongue is Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress;" which is just a sort of typical story, a sort of allegory, representative of great truths that are concealed under it. One of the reasons of it is no doubt this, that between God's spiritual world and God's material world there are latent links, and ties, and silent harmonies, that render the one the illustration of the other, and both still beautiful and welcome to him that seeks true instruction. There is no doubt that, in the whole of this book, Jesus is the great Alpha and Omega. He himself says, "Moses wrote of me." Where did Moses write of Christ? He does not mention his name; yet he writes of him, and predicts him, and speaks of him, and he explains him. And when Jesus preached himself, what did he do? "Beginning at Moses and the prophets, he showed them that he must needs suffer, and rise again from the dead."

Now in the first verse of this chapter it states that "the Lord called unto Moses." There is no doubt from "the Lord" not being in the Hebrew, but a reference or relative—"he," the personal pronoun

carries us back to the last person spoken of; that the reference is, therefore, to the cloud being on the tabernacle, and God revealed in it; that therefore it was from the cloud on the mercy-seat—no longer marching in the desert during this time, but located between the cherubim—that God spake to Moses, and told him these things.

Then the sacrifices instituted here. If you will be at the trouble to read the history of heathen sacrifices, by the most polished Greeks or by the warlike Romans, you will find so many accompaniments of puerilities, childishness, superstition, divination, that you will be constrained to acknowledge they cannot be from God. But these sacrifices of Levi, however minute the prescriptions were, have about them a plainness, a simplicity—I would say, notwithstanding their peculiar and painful character—a majesty, that indicate their origin to be from God:

The first sacrifice mentioned is called “the whole burnt-offering;” sometimes called a *holocaust*. A *holocaust* is derived from two Greek words meaning “a whole burnt-offering;” and those sacrifices of animals which are described in this chapter were all of them of that description—that is, they were totally consumed; not one fragment was left behind—they were totally consumed upon the altar; as if to indicate the exhaustion of them by the fiery wrath or judgment which consumed them. We observe that the sacrifices that were offered, as stated in the third verse, must be without blemish. Now there must be some design in that—they were to be spotless and without blemish. And when we open the New Testament, and find Christ described as “a lamb without

blemish," we then see at once that there must have been here a prefiguration of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." The sacrifices that they offered, you will also notice, were very costly and valuable; although, in mercy, there was a special provision for the poor. If a man was very rich, he offered an ox or a bullock; but if he was not very rich, he offered a sheep or a lamb; if he was very poor he offered what is here laid down—"an offering of turtle doves, or of young pigeons." And you will recollect the Virgin Mary, when she came for her purification into the temple, made this offering, which was a silent testimony that, whatever her descent was, she was then among the poor of the people: the Levitical economy prescribing offerings for every man; and holding the poor woman's pigeons as acceptable a sacrifice as the rich man's bullock or ox.

In the next place you will notice, that the sacrifices were not killed by the priests—there is no evidence of that. In the 5th verse, we read, that "he," the offerer, "shall kill the bullock before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle it." Any one might kill the victim, but only the priest might take the blood, and sprinkle that blood. When our blessed Lord was slain, he was slain by the wicked and the profane—any one might slay the victim; but he himself, the Great Priest, could alone make the atonement.

We read, in the next place, in the 7th verse, "And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire." Now, this fire was kindled from heaven. It is the origin of the traditional and superstitious fire of the heathen.

I find the strongest corroboration of the Divine origin of the Bible in the reflected, and refracted, and distorted lights of it that are spread through heathendom. You can see, in their traditional corruptions, that there must have been a grand original, just as you see, in a forged sovereign, the evidence of a real sovereign. So, in these heathen corruptions, you are referred back to something that was originally good, and from God.

The very fire that consumed the sacrifice was kindled from the pillar of fire by night, and the pillar of cloud by day—it was Divine in its origin. The animal that was to be slain must be brought to the altar that was within the inclosure, and before the tabernacle, and there slain ; and it must be consumed by that fire alone. To offer upon another altar was blasphemy, to consume the victim by other fire was also regarded as blasphemy. Only upon that altar, and by that fire, and in that place prescribed by God himself, must sacrifice be made.

You will notice a strange law here—that the legs were to be washed. It seems to indicate that, as the animal offered must be without blemish, the feet, being the parts that came into contact with the earth, must be cleansed ; and, in order that the spotlessness of the victim might be constantly exhibited, and the fact of its spotlessness thoroughly impressed upon the national mind, the feet were required to be washed before the animal could be slain.

Great ideas were latent under these provisions, and those ideas fructified like seeds in the national mind, till the fulness of the time came, when all the shadows and types and symbols of Levi passed away, and the

glorious realities of Christ crucified dawned upon a waiting and a longing world. On verse 4, Bush makes the following just observations :—

“The original word *קַפָּר* *kâphar* signifies, primarily, *to cover*; not so much, however, in the sense of *wrapping* as with a garment, as in that of *smearing* or *plastering*, it being applied, Gen. vi. 14, to the act of *coating* the ark *with pitch*. Its radical sense, therefore, is rather that of an *adhesive* than a *loose covering*. From this primary notion of *covering*, it came to be applied by metaphorical usage to the *appeasing* of anger, or to that act of an offending party by which he succeeds in procuring favour and forgiveness from the person or party offended. In this sense it is applied to the *appeasing* of an angry countenance, Gen. xxxii. 20, ‘For he said, I will *appease* him (Heb. will *cover* his face) with the present.’ 2 Sam. xxi. 3, ‘What shall I do for you, and wherewith shall I *make the atonement*?’ (Heb. *cover*.) Prov. xvi. 14, ‘The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will *pacify* it.’ (Heb. will *cover* it.) Its predominant usage is in relation to the *reconciliation* effected between God and sinners, in which sense *atonement for sin* is the *covering* of sin, or the securing the sinner from punishment. Thus, when sin is pardoned, or its consequent calamity removed, the sin or person may be said to be *covered*, *made safe*, *expiated*, or *atoned*. Accordingly we find the pardon of sin expressly called the *covering of sin*, Nehem. iv. 4, 5, ‘Our God give them for a prey in the land of captivity, and *cover* not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee.’ Ps. xxxii. 1, ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is

covered.' Ps. lxxxv. 2, 'Thou has brought back the captivity of Jacob; thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast *covered* all their sin.' All such expiatory offerings pointed directly to Christ, who is the grand *atonement* or *reconciliation* for the sins of men. Dan. ix. 24. 1 John ii. 2. Heb. x. 8, 10. The burnt-offering, it is to be observed, had not, like the sin-offering, respect to any *particular* sin, but was designed to make atonement for sin in general. Thus it is said of Job, ch. i. 5, that he 'offered burnt-offerings,' (saying,) 'It may be that my sons have sinned.' "

Thus do we find the glorious Gospel. Thus clearly does the glad sound ring in the desert, and around Mount Sinai, and amid the far-spread tents of Israel. God never left Himself without a witness, nor His precious Gospel without a testimony. In shadow or in light it has been from the beginning.

CHAPTER II.

EXPIATORY AND EUCHARISTIC OFFERINGS. BIBLE HAS VARIOUS ADAPTATIONS. REASONS OF MINUTE PRESCRIPTIONS. DIFFERENCE OF RITES OF JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN ECONOMIES. ATONEMENT THE BASIS OF SPIRITUAL OFFERINGS. CAIN AND ABEL. THE POOR. LEAVEN. FIRST-FRUCTS.

You will recollect that we read in the Book of Exodus, which we have now finished, the account of that beautiful creation in the desert called the Tabernacle of the Lord; the commencement or the dim outline of the more magnificent Temple of Solomon, which again has given way to a yet more glorious thing, though not glorious in the eyes of this world—a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, a chosen generation, to show forth, by purer and more sacred rites, the praises of Him who hath called us from darkness into his marvellous light.

Having seen and studied the house, with all its material, and also having read of the altar, and all the furniture of the house, we come now very naturally in proper order to the worship that was to be carried on in that house. In the first chapter we have seen the expiatory rites—which we read, as you recollect, last Sunday morning: sacrifices of animals—bulls, or rams, or goats; blood being shed and therefore expiatory and atoning sacrifices; I mean in their

reference; which were to be offered up on the brazen altar without.

In this second chapter we come to a totally distinct class of offerings, which were not expiatory, but eucharistic; which had nothing to do with any reference to the atonement for sin, but simply to do with the expression of individual hearts, as grateful to God for the mercies that he had bestowed upon them; and following not superseding the sacrificial rites; just as the Lord's Supper follows the Great Atonement made upon the altar once for all for the sins of the guilty. These chapters that we have read are intensely interesting and most appropriate for public reading. There are parts of the Bible most appropriate for being read in the sanctuary; parts of the Bible more appropriate to be read in the family; and some parts of it exclusively to be read by individuals; but each part beautiful in its place, suitable in its season; and all parts inspired by Him from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. And it seems the opposite of an uninteresting thing to read of the way in which our fathers worshipped God; or to inquire what might be the reasons that he appointed these apparently cumbersome, minute, and laborious observances, among the people who were chosen by Him to be a holy nation, and to be the types and representatives of the true Israel—the chosen and redeemed people of God. The reason why He was so minute in the appointment of the ceremonials of the Tabernacle, is the same reason why he was so minute in his prescriptions for the construction of the Tabernacle. Recollect that this people were in the midst of heathendom, surrounded by Egyptians, and Canaanites,

and idolaters of all sorts ; and that human nature is ever prone to incorporate with itself, because a fallen nature, that which is evil, and to join something which is unholy to that which is holy. The tendency of this people left to itself—even left to itself in the minutest particular—ever was to incorporate with its rites the rites of the heathen, and grossly and criminally to apostatize from the worship and the service of the true and the living God. They, therefore, were under mechanical arrangements most rigid, most unbending. We are under moral arrangements, where principles are laid down by which we are to regulate our sacred and our every day practice: the Jewish economy was a Church that had not only principles, but prescriptions, minute, mechanical and exact, in which they were kept in bondage, chained and fastened to certain given rites of worship and sacrifice ; we, under the Christian economy, are emancipated from the mechanical, but still under the reach and range of the moral : we are left with regulating truths to carry those truths out. Our duty is prescribed ; our doctrine is laid down ; but the application of both to the circumstances of the world, as they arise in it, is left to ourselves, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in close and frequent application to God's Holy Word.

Now, I have said the first chapter is an account of offerings typical of the one Atonement made once for all. The second chapter is the account of eucharistic offerings, which are typical of those mentioned in the New Testament, where it is said, “To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices”—typified by these in the second

chapter—"God is well pleased." And again, where he says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,"—in opposition to these dead ones,—"which is your reasonable" and your acceptable "service."

You have, therefore, in the first chapter, the Jews worshipping God through Christ, the slain Lamb; you have them in the second chapter presenting, still through the pleading and interceding high-priest, spiritual sacrifices according to the nature of that economy, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

This chapter begins by saying, "And when any will offer a meat offering." That meat offering is simply an expression of thanksgiving, consisting of corn, or flour, or bread of any kind. It is the word *minchacorban*, the same word that occurs in the New Testament; if any shall deprive his father, or his mother, or his poor relative of that support which is due, and shall contribute to what is called in Rome "a pious use," or do what we should call robbing parents in order to enrich the priesthood—if any one shall do so, and call it *corban* devoted to God, such a one is guilty, to say the least, of great hypocrisy, or is a great fanatic. Now, the word for offering is used for something consecrated or dedicated to God; and it is here called *mincha*, not an atoning offering, not expiatory offering, but the meat offering, dedicated or consecrated to God. It is very remarkable, in the original Hebrew of the 1st verse, "When any will offer"—it is, "When any soul will offer," to denote that, while the offering was so mechanical, it was to be

the offering of the soul, and not the mere offering of the body.

Daniel alludes, in his prophecy, to the distinction between the 1st and 2nd chapters, when he says that the great Antichrist shall cause the "sacrifice and the oblation" to cease. We have the "sacrifice" in the first chapter of Leviticus, and the oblation in the second; both fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, this arrangement of the meat offering after the victim is slain, you will observe, is made in order to show us that every spiritual offering must be based on and flow from an atonement: the atonement first, the spiritual offering next. So you have in the first chapter the atonement; in the second, that which flows from it—spiritual or eucharistic offerings. Now, the defect in Cain's worship, apart from his nature, was this: Cain believed the second chapter,—though I am speaking by anticipation, because these chapters were not then written;—he offered the *mincha*, that is, the meat offering, or the offering of corn, of flour, or of bread; Abel believed the first chapter, and felt that he ought to attend to it before he ventured on the second. The difference between the two was this:—Abel's offering was an expiatory one—a lamb slain, according to the prescriptions of the first chapter; therefore, Abel believed in sin's havoc, and in sin's forgiveness, in the blood that can wash it away. Cain passed by the first chapter, and regarded only the second; disbelieving in the entrance of sin, and therefore in the necessity of atonement; and thinking that such offerings as his father and mother presented in Paradise, before their fall, would still be accepted by God.

In the first of these chapters, we have the first

great lesson—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission;" in the second chapter you have the next lesson, that wherever there is pardon for sin, there will be holiness of life, renunciation of sin, and consecration of ourselves to God, as a ceaseless sacrifice.

Then, in the next place, you will ask, Why these varieties of offering? It speaks in one place of the meat offering with oil and frankincense; the next place, of flour baked in the oven; in the next place, of green corn. Why this variety? It is just one of those traits that indicate that the God that made creation has inspired the Bible. He is here providing for the poor man as minutely as for the rich. He says, If you are a rich man, and can give a valuable and a costly offering, it is your duty to do so; but if you are a poor man, then offer that offering which agrees with your position; and be sure that the poor man's offering of twenty seeds of corn will be as acceptable to God as the rich man's offering of the finest flour perfumed with costly frankincense, and anointed and consecrated with the most precious oil. It is a beautiful thought of our heavenly Father, that the archangel that is nearest to his throne is not dearer to him nor more watched by him than the poorest widow or orphan that weeps and prays, and looks and leans on him in the streets of this great metropolis. It is one of those traits that come out incidentally in the Bible, indicating the harmony between a God that made the now torn and stained book—the earth, and that inspired the perfect and holy Book--his own gracious Word.

You will notice, too, certain regulations here that

had a moral significance. One, for instance, was that there should be no leaven introduced into the sacrifice. The Apostle carries out that idea when he says, "Therefore let us keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth"—indicating the moral character of the offerer. You will see the frankincense, too, that was to be added to the offering, and how the Apostle alludes to it in the New Testament :—"We are a sweet savour to them ;" and again—"An offering of sweet savour unto God ;" meaning God's acceptance of our services through Christ Jesus ; by whom they are most welcome in his sight, and most precious to him. Again, we read of oil used to anoint the sacrifice. The Apostle alludes to this, when he says, "Ye have an unction"—that means an anointing with oil—"of the Holy One ; ye know all things ;" and Christians are, literally translated, "men who are covered with oil"—that is, consecrated men : the sacred consecrating oil of the sanctuary being imitable by no man, and denoting one who is set apart or consecrated to God.

Then you will notice here a provision for the priests ; in every part of this chapter there is a provision for them. Aaron and his sons were to have a certain portion. And so the Apostle, when he alludes to this, says that it is right and reasonable that they that minister by the altar—evidently alluding to the ancient economy—should live by the altar ; which alludes to this very passage, and to the regulation that is here laid down. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple ? and they which wait at the

altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

In the next place, there was not only to be the absence of leaven in the sacrifices, but there was to be the presence of salt, which is always used throughout the Scripture as the symbol of perfection. Bush makes the following instructive criticisms on this usage:—

"Every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt. Salt is the opposite to leaven, as it preserves from putrefaction and corruption, and was therefore used to signify the *purity* and *persevering fidelity* necessary in the worshippers of God. It was called the ‘salt of the covenant,’ because as salt was incorruptible, so was the covenant and promise of Jehovah, which on this account is called (2 Chron. xiii. 5) ‘a covenant of salt;’ i. e. an everlasting covenant. But in order to obtain an adequate idea of the reasons which prompted the use of this article, and made it so indispensable in the services of the Jewish altar, we are to remember that the sacrifices were a kind of feast, in which those who partook of them were for the time being the guests of God, and eating and drinking at his table. But it was by eating and drinking together, that all important covenants were anciently ratified and confirmed; and as salt was, of course, never wanting at such entertainments, it came at length to be regarded as a symbol of friendship, and the phrase ‘covenant of salt’ was but another name for the most firm, enduring and inviolable compact. In like manner, salt among the ancients was the emblem of friendship and fidelity, and therefore

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

used in all their sacrifices and covenants. No part of their religious ceremonies is more prominent than that which consists in the use of salt. Thus in Virgil, *Aen.* Lib. II. l. 133 :

‘ Mihi sacra parari
Et salsa fruges, et circum tempora vittæ.’

‘ For me the sacred rites were prepared, and the *salted cake*, and fillets to bind about my temples.’ Servius’ explanation is, ‘ Salt and barley, called salted meal, with which they used to sprinkle the forehead of the victim, the sacrificial fire, and the knives.’ From the ‘ *mola salsa*, *salted cake*, of the Latins, were derived the words, *immolo*, *immolatio*, *to immolate*, *immolation*, and this by synecdoche came to be applied to the whole process of sacrificing. So after the salted meal it was customary to pour wine on the head of the victim, which by that ceremony was said to be *macta*, i. e. *magis aucta*, *augmented* or *increased*, whence the term *mactatio* in the heathen sacrifices to express the killing of the victim immediately after the affusion of the wine. But as to the sacred use of salt, Homer affords several distinct allusions to it in the religious rites mentioned in the Iliad. Thus :—

‘ Then near the altar of the darting king,
Disposed in rank, their hecatomb they bring ;
With water purify their hands, and take
The sacred offering of the *salted cake*.’

IL. I. l. 584.

“ And again :—

‘ Above the coals the smoking fragment burns,
And sprinkles *sacred salt* from lifted urns.’

IL. IX. l. 281.

every traveller who has visited the modern nations of the East, has furnished us with striking anecdotes illustrative of the sacredness with which salt was regarded as an emblem of fidelity in all their compacts. Thus Baron Du Tott, speaking of one who was desirous of his acquaintance, says, upon his departure, ‘ He promised in a short time to return. I had already attended him half way down the staircase, when stopping, and turning briskly to one of my domestics, *Bring me directly*, said he, *some bread and salt*. What he requested was brought; when, taking a little salt between his fingers, and putting it with a mysterious air on a bit of bread, he ate with a devout gravity, assuring me that I might now rely on him.’ And D’Herbelot remarks, that ‘ among other exploits which are recorded of *Jacoub ben Laith*, he is said to have broken into a palace, and having collected a very large booty, which he was on the point of carrying away, he found his foot kicked something which made him stumble; putting it to his mouth, the better to distinguish it, his tongue soon informed him it was a lump of salt; upon this, according to the morality, or rather superstition, of the country, where the people considered salt as a pledge of hospitality, he was so touched that he left all his booty.’”

Such allusions as these are also explained by this: “ Let your sacrifices be always with salt”—that is, seasoned with grace. And again he says, “ Every sacrifice shall be seasoned with salt”—that is, all that you do shall spring from a pure heart, a pure motive, and for a holy and good end.

And then the first-fruits were to be offered to God; and so, in the same manner, we ought to make an

offering to God of that which we have in the greatest abundance. If you have been made in the year 1853 unexpectedly rich, you ought to present an offering of first-fruits of that. If you enjoy unexpected health, you ought in some shape to express your thankfulness to God for it. If you possess domestic mercies, national mercies, social mercies, do not forget to give ; let not the gift blind your eyes to the Giver, but for all that you have received give thanks to him who gives the gift, and when he takes it away, puts himself in the vacuum that is left behind, more precious than the gift that has taken wings and departed.

CHAPTER III.

INSULATION OF JEWS. DESIGNED TO INculcate IDEAS OF ATONEMENT. CHARACTER OF OFFERER. WHEN THESE OFFERINGS WERE MADE. RITES. BLOOD NOT TO BE EATEN.

You will remember that in the 1st chapter of Leviticus we had the explanation of the expiatory or atoning victims that were commanded by God to be offered by the sons of Levi; in the second chapter, which we read last Sunday morning, we had the meat offerings, or the presentation of ourselves as I explained—a living sacrifice, which constitutes our reasonable service. In this chapter we have what are called “the peace offerings,” not the least precious or beautiful part of the ordinances of Levi. Some may think that these prescriptions are so needlessly specific and minute that they appear unworthy of the God that instituted them. But you will recollect—what I always tried to show when we were explaining the Tabernacle—that this people were surrounded by dense masses of heathenism, just as the Dutch are by the sea; and that every provision made in Israel was to keep at bay the inrush of heathenism; and to present a people that should be the witnesses of God in spite of heathendom; and the very rites and ceremonies that they were to practise were designedly minute, that there might be no opening for conformity to the heathen, very often crossing those of the heathen;—that they might

be a marked, a distinctive, and a peculiar people. There is, therefore, far greater wisdom in these prescriptions than strikes the superficial reader. And another reason why all this is given so minutely is, that the great subject of the teaching of Christianity is the Atonement. That is the heart and the life of Christianity ; all else without that is hard and dry ; all its precepts pervaded by that are full of life, and not hard. Well, then, these rites and ceremonies were minute, in order to impress upon the Jewish mind, and upon the mind of humanity itself, the great ideas of substitution, atonement, vicarious sacrifice ; till this idea became so familiarized to the hearts of mankind that they should be able not only to appreciate, but to hail with gratitude and joy that perfect Atonement of which these were the shadows—that finished Sacrifice to which these pointed as John the Baptist pointed to the Saviour, saying each of them in the days of Levi, “We are voices crying in the desert, Behold Jesus, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.” This third chapter relates to the third kind of offering, called the “peace offering.” And these three different sacrifices are alluded to by the prophet when he says, “Though ye offer me burnt offerings”—that is one sort—“and your meat offerings, I will not accept them ; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.” This is Amos the prophet, who wrote about seven or eight hundred years before the birth of Christ, and long after the institution of these sacrifices, referring to them. And a very remarkable feature in what Amos says is this, that God says, “I reject these ;” to prove that these were not the only things ; but that

the most splendid offerings, the most precious holocaust, were all unacceptable to God, unless the offerer had a pure heart, and clean hands, and lifted not up his eyes to vanity.

Now, these peace offerings were offered first of all, on the recovery of peace with God in consequence of the expiation. The expiatory offering was first, not the peace offering: first the atonement, then the calm that results from peace with God through Christ the Atonement. These peace offerings were also presented as expressive of thanksgiving for mercies, blessings, and benefits that had been received. They were also presented on the performance of a vow that had been made by any of the children of Israel.

You will notice another feature in all these offerings—that the offerer might kill the lamb, but the priest of Levi alone might offer it: so Jew and Gentile slew with wicked hands the Lord of glory, but he himself was the Priest that presented himself a sacrifice on the altar of Deity, perfect and complete, for the sins of all that believe.

These offerings were also made, I may mention, at the consecration of priests, on the expiry of a Nazarite's vow, at the dedication of the Tabernacle and the Temple, and at the presentation of first-fruits. You will notice that in the Jewish economy everything brought a Jew to the Temple, and above the Temple, to the Temple's God. Was he afflicted? He prayed. Was he merry? He sung psalms. Was he blessed with a golden harvest? He gave the first-fruits to God. Had he finished a vow? He went to God to thank him. Had he received any mercy, was he enriched with any blessing? He felt it his first

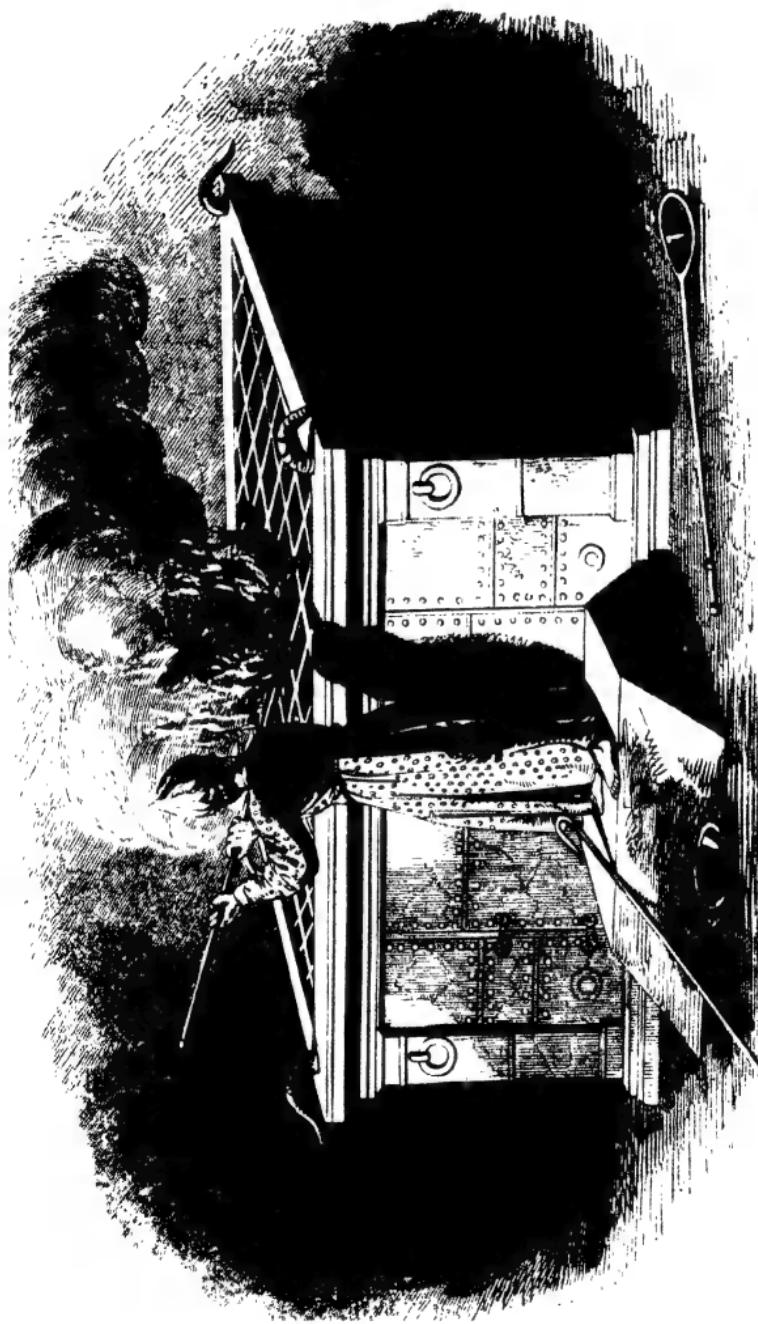
duty to ask God's blessing, to give to God praise, and to expect prosperity in the *ratio* in which he did so. And does God expect less of us? Does God expect less of us in this dispensation? And yet how often do we murmur when we lose, how rarely are we thankful when we gain! How often are we dissatisfied when we do not get what we like, or when God takes what he thinks best—and how rarely, when we are prospered, when we have suddenly become rich, when we have unexpectedly become great, how rarely does the blessing prompt us to go to God! What a sad thing is human nature without God; when it suffers it rebels against God; when it prospers it forgets him. But when grace has changed his heart, then our merry days make us sing psalms, our sad days make us trust in God, and our prosperity and our adversity equally bring us to him, who sweetens the one by his presence, and substitutes himself for the loss sustained in the heart of the sufferer.

You will notice, too, in this account, that the person that made the offering was to lay his hand upon the head of the victim that was slain. What a beautiful picture is that of our interest in Christ Jesus! The poor Jew—though this was not confessing sin in this chapter, but giving thanks—yet whether he confessed his sins or gave thanks he did the same; he laid his hand upon the head of the victim, confessed his sins over it, gave thanks over it; and all the sin was transferred typically to the victim that suffered, and all the glory transferred typically to him who was the great antitype and object of that victim. Thus the believer still lays, not his literal hand—for ours is the economy of the spirit; whatever a Jew did materially, mecha-

nically, palpably, that a Christian does spiritually, but no less truly and really. The Jew laid his literal hand upon a literal victim's head ; the Christian lays the trust of his heart upon an unseen but not an unknown Saviour. I say, the Jew laid his hand upon the head of his victim, confessed his sins, and was forgiven ; the Christian lays, not his hand, but his heart, not upon a slain bullock or a slain lamb, but on a once slain but now living Saviour. And as sure as the Jew got ceremonial forgiveness by doing literally that act, so surely will the greatest sinner that thus leans, and looks to, and trusts in the only Atonement, receive the pardon and the remission of his sins. The great thought that we need to inculcate in the present day in the greatest simplicity is the universal offer of pardon and of peace in Christ Jesus.

What is the use of learned professors, as I told you last Sunday morning, preaching limited future punishment, when, as I told you then, no man need go to ruin ? Not a soul in this assembly need ever perish ; there is no decree, there is no predestination, that drives any soul to hell ; and if any man goes there, he goes there not blind, but with his eyes open, not driven, but deliberately. Heaven is wide open ; the price of entrance is free to the oldest, the chietest and the worst of sinners ; and if anybody misses heaven it will not be because God had not mercy enough, Christ's Atonement had not efficacy enough, but because you would not be at the trouble to take God's way, and were determined to persist in your own. Thus let the believer lay his heart's trust upon Jesus, and have peace.

You will notice here that eating of blood was for-



THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING.

IV.

IN HEATHENDOM AS AMONG THE JEWS.
SINS OF PARTIES. IGNORANCE HOW FAR EXONERATORY.
ATONEMENTS. NUMBER SEVEN. SACRIFICE OFFERED WITHOUT
THE GATE. OFFICIAL BANK AGGRAVATES SIN. THE VAIL.

I come, in the chapter I have read, to a fourth class of sins and transgressions committed against God, as well as a fourth peculiar provision for such sins as have been committed in ignorance of the law of God, or in ignorance of the nature of their demerit. Before alluding specially, however, to the contents of the chapter, let me remark that I can easily understand how the purest and loftiest taste should be offended by reading constantly of the slaughter of lambs, and bullocks, and goats, the pouring out of their blood around the altar, and sprinkling the horns or the tips of the golden altar of incense with it; and therefore it has been said by some of a sceptical turn of mind, that all this seems unworthy of God, as it must be distasteful to man. Now, I would wish you to recollect that the very parties who object to this are admirers of the Greeks and the Romans in the meridian greatness of their aesthetic attainments. These parties should recollect that the most polished nations of heathendom had the same rites, the same sacrifices, but with barbarous concomitants that were

utterly unknown to or separate from the observances of the Jews. Therefore, if Jewish sacrifices be so offensive to a lofty aesthetic taste, as modern sceptics allege, they should recollect that these sacrifices were not peculiar to the Jews, but were observed by the Greeks and Romans also, only in the latter they were accompanied with forms and ceremonies still more offensive to a cultivated taste, and not only offensive to the taste, but—what is sad enough—without the mighty moral meaning that the sacrifices of the Jews had.

I said before, I think, that God's great design in instituting these rules was just to write it on the heart of nations, line upon line, precept upon precept, that there was something wrong between man and God ; to engrave it next, not less legibly and deeply, that there could be no pardon for what man had done, and no satisfaction to the justice, holiness, and truth of God, except by some great expiatory sacrifice, of which these were but dim foreshadows and pre-figurations. And you know quite well how unteachable human nature is where it does not want to be taught ; and how necessary it is to reiterate and repeat the great and important truths which you desire to be influential upon mankind. Such is the effect of repetition of a thing that a very celebrated demagogue who has passed away, said, "Tell a lie every day, and it will ultimately be believed to be truth." I do not accept his sentiment ; I merely quote it to show how strongly he felt the value of repetition. And when that most excellent and truly noble spirit, Dr. Chalmers, was asked, to what did he attribute the success of his preaching ? he is reported to have said, "Under

God, to one thing ; repetition, repetition, repetition." In other words, it is the repetition of a thought that causes it ultimately to become rooted in the hearts and feelings of those that hear it. Hence one great use of coming to the house of God is not to get new thoughts, but to get reiterated and restruck the old ones ; and the effect, under God, of constant attendance on the sanctuary is, not that you learn something that you probably think you did not know before—though that may be true—but that you hear old things put in new lights, set at new angles ; and the truths of God's Word, like precious gems, will bear to be looked at, and turned over, and analyzed, and microscopically examined ; and instead of wearying, you will only be refreshed, and instead of going away dissatisfied and displeased, you will be thankful that you have heard blessed truths, and find that you now feel them more perfectly than you ever felt them before. This, therefore, will explain—and your own experience will confirm it—what seems at first sight a thing unnecessary,—that God should thus reiterate and repeat, line upon line and precept upon precept.

The sins that are alluded to in this chapter are, first, sins committed by the high-priest ; secondly, sins committed by the congregation ; thirdly, sins committed by the ruler of the people, the magistrate, the judge, the king ; and, lastly, sins committed by the common people. And then the sins that are thus classified are, you will observe, what are called "sins of ignorance." I know nothing that gives a higher view of the holiness of God than this—that not only sins that we culpably and deliberately commit are

guilt in his sight; but that we commit sins in our ignorance, which are sins, though we do not suppose them to be so. God's law is a fixture, and is not dependent upon our estimate. There is sin committed in the dark as well as noonday. Sin committed by those who are not acquainted with it as such, as well as when committed, though it may be aggravated in the last case, by those who are acquainted with it, is still sin. No ignorance on our part exculpates. I do not believe that one's ignorance of a sin dilutes or extenuates that sin. I know that the text has often been quoted, which I think I explained before, in 1 Timothy i. 12, 13, where the Apostle Paul says, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me with the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Now it has been said that sins committed in ignorance are no sins at all; and that the ignorance of a duty is atonement for omitting that duty, or expiatory of the sin. My answer is, ignorance may extenuate our guilt, but it does not in the least modify the sin, or make an atonement for it. But the passage here, I think, is very much misread. Those of you who have been accustomed to read Greek writers in your youth will recollect, that very frequently an exclamation is introduced in a narrative in the middle of a sentence—something like a parenthesis in our language, and not connected with the continuous current of the chapter or the narrative. The expression here, "I obtained mercy," is really parenthetical. And you will understand it if I read it thus:—"Which was before a

blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." But in the midst of his narrative he exclaims, "But I obtained mercy,"—that is parenthetical; it is an exclamation in the middle of the sentence, as if his sense of the mercy he had received was so strong that he could not help stopping short and exclaiming, "But I obtained mercy." Leave out the clause, "But I obtained mercy," and then the passage reads thus:—"Which was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." His persecutions, and his blasphemy, were the result of his ignorance and unbelief. It is not stated that he obtained mercy because of his ignorance; but that he committed sin because he was ignorant. The exclamation, "I obtained mercy," is parenthetical, and denotes what the paramount thought in the Apostle's mind was—"But," in the midst of all this, "I obtained mercy."

Now, the sins recorded in this chapter are those committed in ignorance; and for such sins thus committed in ignorance there is a special provision made throughout the chapter. Each offering is described minutely and in detail, but to the details of the description I need not turn your attention. First, he says that the blood shall be sprinkled seven times. Seven is used in Scripture as the great symbol of perfection. Thus the seven churches denote the one catholic or universal church; thus the seven spirits denote the one Holy Spirit—the perfect sanctifier and comforter of all the people of God. And to do a thing seven times was equivalent to doing it perfectly and completely. Hence, "if thy brother sin against

thee seven times"—that is, commit a great sin against you, you are to forgive him.

In the next place, the victim was to be taken and sacrificed without the gate. Now, to show how completely this is typical of our Lord's death, we read in the Hebrews xiii., "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate,"—the very language of this chapter—"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

And, in the next place, you will notice that throughout the whole of this chapter the greater the official personage that sinned, the greater the sacrifice that was required for the expiation of that sin. If you read the chapter at your leisure you will find that a more precious sacrifice was required when the high-priest or the ruler sinned than when one of the common people or the congregation sinned. And this teaches us that, while sin is essentially the same in all, it is aggravated in its character as it is far more extensive in its pernicious influences when it is perpetrated by persons in high places in the church, or in the high places of the state; and just because sin committed in lofty places spreads further, deals its havoc wider, we ought the more earnestly to pray that those that God has placed over us in the chief places of the land, or of the Church of Christ, may be so guided and governed by His Holy Spirit that they shall let their light shine before them, that those that are beneath seeing their good works may glorify their Father who is in heaven.

You will notice next, that the blood of the victim

was to be sprinkled on the veil that separated the holy place from the rest of the sanctuary. Now, the Apostle Paul alludes to this very rite in Hebrews x. 19, where he says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest"—that is, to heaven—"by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Nothing is more remarkable than the perfect parallelism between Leviticus—the Third Book in the Pentateuch—and the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. The one is the key to the other, the one the solution of the difficulties of the other. And you will never understand Christ's sacrifice in all its glory, its fulness, its applicability, until you have read very carefully the minute—it may be in some respects inexplicably minute—details of the sacrifices offered up year by year by the children of Levi. The one is meant to set forth in all its minute details the other. The Jew never can be satisfied with the first alone—the Christian will not understand fully the second alone. The Old and New Testaments, like the twin lips of an oracle, speak the one Christ, proclaim the one truth, and cast light mutually upon each other. Bush remarks on the Sin-offering :—

"The strongest impression, perhaps, which we receive from it is that of guilt and responsibility attaching, in the sight of God, to sins of infirmity and ignorance; for it is to such that it mainly has respect. We are prone to imagine that an offence committed unintentionally or unawares, cannot incur the charge of guilt. Men do not scruple to plead their ignorance, their infirmities, their natural and habitual propensities, in excuse for their misdeeds. But the law of God

determines otherwise. It enjoins an onerous ceremony for the expiation of sins unconsciously committed. The sin, it is true, is not so great as if it were done knowingly, wilfully, and presumptuously ; yet still it is sin, and as such needs an atonement. Without the shedding of blood there was no remission. At the same time we are not to lose sight of the consolation which flows through this typical ordinance to the bosom of the penitent believer. The language of the Apostle, Hebrews xiii. 11—13, makes it evident that the Sin-offering pointed directly to Christ, through whose efficacious atonement all his sins, whether of greater or less aggravation, are cancelled and abolished. It is those daily infirmities, those sins unconsented to, and yet committed : those faults too covert for detection, or too late detected ; it is they that constitute his daily struggles, and wage within him an unceasing warfare. And when he has seen the sins of his wilful alienation borne away by the atoning sacrifice, these cleaving vestiges of a corrupt nature will often vex him with painful fears, lest there should still be a demand of wrath against him. How appropriate, then, is this exhibition of a continual offering for our continual need ! ‘He that knew no sin was made sin (a sin-offering) for us.’ Here we have pardon; not once, to cancel the past debt and begin on a new score ; but pardon daily, hourly renewed, as often as the Sin-offering is pleaded before the Father, is brought in faith, and laid upon the altar before the Lord. We do nothing well. If we pray, it is with cold and wandering thoughts ; if we hear, it is with distracted and forgetful minds ; we are continually surprised, continually overtaken, continually turned aside by the current of

temptation, that runs so strong against us, when perhaps we cannot convict ourselves of one indulged deliberate sin. Therefore did the God of mercies ordain this peculiar institution, prefiguring to them of old the divine oblation to be once offered, but for ever efficacious, for the pardon of this and every kind of guilt."

How precious must that Saviour be to whom so many elaborate institutions unitedly pointed! How perfect must that atonement be for which God was four thousand years making preparation! Let us thankfully accept it. Let us rejoice in it all the day long. "His blood cleanseth from all sin."

CHAPTER V.

SIN-OFFERING AND TRESPASS-OFFERING. ADJURATION. IGNORANCE. OFFERINGS PROVIDED FOR THE POOR. SACRIFICE AND CONFESSION. BURDENSONENESS OF JEWISH RITES. IDEA OF EXPIATION INculcated.

IN the last chapter we had the record and description—or rather in previous chapters—of what was called the sin-offering. The sin-offering was a sacrifice, or an atonement, made by the priest on the altar, for one who had in some shape violated the known and express law of God. But the trespass-offering seems to relate to the violation of ritual law, and the public worship and ordinances of the Sanctuary, the Tabernacle, and the Temple subsequently, into which any Israelite, through indifference or ignorance, might possibly fall. And you will therefore see, that almost every sin contemplated in this chapter has more relation to ceremonial than to moral trespasses against God. Especially, however, does it relate, in one or two instances, to the violation of the duties that we owe one to another. The first verse opens with a statement, that if any one, or “a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it.” Our translation suggests, if it suggests at all, a very obscure and imperfect meaning. It is not, “If a soul hear a person

swear, and do not rebuke the swearer, or tell of the swearer," which seems to be suggested by our version; but, If a person summoned to a court of law, under the ancient Jewish economy, adjured by the officiating judge to tell the truth, should not so tell the truth, and all that he knew, then he should be guilty. We have an illustration of this verse in such a passage as that where the high-priest came to our blessed Lord, as recorded in Matthew xxvi. 68, and said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Now, that was the high-priest acting upon the first verse of this very chapter. And our Lord then heard what is called "the swearing" in this verse, or what in that case was the adjuration of the high-priest; and as you notice, so obedient was the true Lamb, the true Saviour, to all the requirements of the ceremonial law, that though he had been dumb when asked previously, yet the moment that the high-priest adjured him, that moment, in obedience to the first verse of this chapter, our blessed Lord answered the question addressed to him; as if it was impossible that he could fail in the observance of the least jot or tittle of the ceremonial law, any more than in the weightiest requirement of God's moral law. We have, in Proverbs xxix., an allusion to this: "He heareth an adjuration, and telleth not,"—that is laid down as a sin, or, in other words, the violation of the first verse of the chapter I have now read.

We observe, in the next place, that a person, after he has done so—if guilty of this sin—shall bring his trespass-offering, and the priest shall offer that trespass-offering as an atonement or a sacrifice

for him. You will also notice, that though he may not have known it at the time,—and this is assumed throughout the whole chapter,—if the party did not know, at the time that he committed the sin, that he really did so ; if ignorance has been the state of his mind when he fell into the violation of one of the commands of God—it is important to observe—it does not therefore exculpate him. On the contrary, at the close of the chapter, we are told expressly that his ignorance, wherein he erred, and wist it not, is not an excuse for his sin ; but there is lying at his door, just as at Cain's, a sin-offering, which he may offer immediately to God. Now that explains a very important thing in our case. If we have sinned, even if we did not know it, it was not less sin—though it may palliate it that we did not know it. And therefore we are not to plead our ignorance as an atonement for the past, but we are to have recourse to that which is freely offered to us, the only Atonement made once for all our sins upon the cross ; and then the sin, whether committed in ignorance or not, shall immediately be forgiven. We shall see, also, that ignorance does not exculpate from a remark made in the Acts : "Had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory,"—indicating that many of the Jews engaged in that awful transaction were ignorant of the great sin and crime they were committing ; but yet the same apostle adds, not with innocent, but "with *wicked* hands ye took and crucified the Lord of Glory ;" thereby showing that there was guilt, though committed in ignorance. And, therefore, instead of persons pleading, as an excuse for their sins, that they did not know, the true way is

to apply to the Atonement, of which they now do know, and to seek forgiveness, not because they were ignorant, but because Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of all that believe.

We have in this chapter another very beautiful provision. In order to show the mercy, the tender sympathy and compassion of God, in all the institutions of his law, you will notice, that if a person could not afford the sacrifice required by the law—the usual one and the proper one—if he was so poor that he could neither purchase nor procure it, then there was provided for him what the poorest criminal might have—a little flour, a handful of flour, which he might take to the priest to offer it for him. You will thus perceive, running through all God's Word, there is no flinching from the moral demands of the law, there is no diluting of the law; but there is ample provision that no man shall have an excuse or an apology for not being interested in the Atonement in which that law was magnified, and by which the sinner may be forgiven. The law remains unchanged in all its infinite exactions; but there is every possible provision that no one shall be able to plead ignorance, or poverty, or meanness, or any other thing, as an excuse for want of sacrifice in his case for infringing the law, or as an apology for not receiving the forgiveness which is extended to them that God accepts through an atonement.

You will also notice, throughout this chapter, that there is, constantly accompanying the sacrifice, confession of sin. The priest shall offer it; the person that sinned shall lay his hand upon the sin-offering,

and confess his sins. Now, whenever confession (and this is worth recollecting) was mentioned by the Jew, it always called up in his mind the idea of a sacrifice at hand. He could not conceive confession without a victim or a sacrifice along with it. And therefore, when John the Baptist came, preaching to the Jews repentance, and men came to him confessing their sins, that was the proof to every Jew that the Great Sacrifice for sin was just at hand. Confession, in the mind of a Jew, always called up what was its companion in his economy—a sacrifice and an atonement for the sins that were confessed. And therefore we say, that “if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just”—but the idea of an atonement is there too—“through Christ to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Let me again remind you, in the last place upon this chapter, that all these institutions were burdensome, to lead the Jew to long for the only possible deliverance,—the advent of the end of them, Christ the Sacrifice.

Secondly, they were atoning: the slaughter and sacrifice of doves, and pigeons, and lambs, and rams, was meant to rivet in the Jew’s mind the great truth, that, without shedding of blood—that is, without a sacrifice—there could not be any remission of sins; and through these dim lenses, these imperfect telescopes, to see the end of them—the Lamb of God to be a propitiation, needing not to be repeated, but made once for all, for the sins of all that believe.

“On the general subject of the sin and trespass-offerings we may remark, that while the purpose and design of these various ceremonies have been dis-

closed so far as they can convey moral and spiritual knowledge to our minds, there is doubtless much in the external forms that must be referred to the sovereign will of God. No other satisfactory reason can be assigned for the requirement in certain cases of one of these species of offerings rather than another, than that it was the divine pleasure so to have it. In the ordinances before us it is clear, that the wilful sins for which a ram was the largest offering required, were greater than those infirmities for which a bullock was demanded. If the atonement had really lain in the type, this would have borne almost an appearance of injustice. But as it was no doubt intended by every kind of expiation to fix the attention upon the Great Atonement thereafter to be made for all sin, the intrinsic value of the particular offering was a matter of comparatively little importance. Indeed it is very conceivable, as we have already remarked, that a sacrifice of less value may have been ordained for sins of greater enormity, with the express purpose of conveying the intimation that the atoning virtue was not in the sacrifice, but in the better blood which was to be shed at a future day on Calvary. Compared with this, every typical prefiguration, even the most costly that could be devised, fell so infinitely short in value, that it might have been a special aim of Divine wisdom to ordain a less, in order the more forcibly to impress upon the mind the intrinsic efficacy of a greater.

"But, while it was not especially important for the worshipper to know why one animal was chosen to expiate one sin, and another another, it *was* important for him to know that for every particular sin there

was a remedy provided; so that no man need the Divine wrath, either by reason of his most secret faults or his most flagrant violations of the law. This is the very essence of gospel truth. No sin, not even the smallest or most unintentional, could be forgiven without a sacrifice. But no man need await the judicial punishment. As soon as he knew his fault, or suspected it, he had his remedy. He knew what he was to do. If he did it not, the condemnation that ensued was self-procured. It was not the fault of the law, nor the fault of the judge, nor the fault even of his own natural weakness or infirmity, if the evil he had committed was not forgiven him. This is the gospel. Whatever men may think of their natural condition as an extenuation of their sins; however they may venture to impugn the justice that assures their punishment; this at least cannot be gainsayed—the remedy is provided; the atonement is made known; the mode of making it personally available is clearly stated; it is efficacious for every sin; it is within the reach of every sinner. Christ by his one oblation has made satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. If any man chooses to abide the consequences of his transgressions, rather than seek forgiveness in the way prescribed, the condemnation is his own deliberate choice."

Thus in this, as in the previous chapter, Christ is all and in all. All that was peculiar to Levi was meant either to reveal Christ, or to draw to Christ, or to drive to Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

SOCIAL SINS. INJURY TO A NEIGHBOUR IS SIN AGAINST GOD. COMMERCIAL DUTIES. FORGIVENESS. CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS. THE CEASELESS BURNING. INDOLENCE AND ACTIVITY. THE DAILY SACRIFICE. HEBRAIC TRADITIONS. PRIESTS' OFFERINGS AND PEOPLE'S OFFERINGS. THEIR DIFFERENCE.

THERE are two great and obvious divisions in the chapter I have read. There is the first part of it, relating to social transgressions, especially in commercial and mercantile life; and there is the last and the chief part of the chapter, which relates to the appointment of the high-priest, Aaron being the first; his sons, or succeeding priests having his succession, continuing to minister according to the law of the appointment of Aaron, their father and their founder.

The first and the shortest part of the chapter relates to social injustice: and I can conceive no law more beautiful, more impartial, more fitted to do the highest good, than the very first requirement with which this chapter begins: "If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord." But mark what constitutes a trespass against the Lord. It consists in "lying to his neighbour," or in that which was delivered to him to keep, or in fellowship, or in taking anything away from his neighbour by violence. Now, in doing so,

he commits a trespass against the Lord : the injury is done against his neighbour, but in its rebound it is sin against God. Every deed of injustice, whether it break the last six commandments or the first four, is sin against God—if it be one of the last six commandments of the Law, it has in it two aspects: one aspect towards man, or injury done to man,—a neighbour; and its aspect towards God, or sin committed against him. We never sin against each other—we do injury to each other—but, when we do so, we sin always against God. And hence the distinction is so important—especially in these days when errors are abroad—that the person against whom the thing is done can forgive in the thing which relates to him: if I steal, or if I injure or wound the neighbour, he from whom I plunder can forgive me the injury, because he is injured and the owner; but the sin that underlies the injury, reaching to God, God alone can forgive. And, therefore, to talk about a priest, whom I have never injured, and against whom I cannot sin—for he has nothing to do with the sin—forgiving me or absolving me, is to say, what is most untrue, unscriptural, and absurd. Sin is committed against God only, and God only, directly and personally, can forgive it ; the injury that accompanies the sin committed against my neighbour he can forgive. If I had injured a priest, then I would go to the priest, and ask his forgiveness ; but not the forgiveness of the sin—he has no business with that ; but only the forgiveness of the injury I have done, and no more. And if I have injured a neighbour, I ask that neighbour to forgive me ; and if he be a Mahometan or a Moslem, I ask him to forgive me the injury that I

have committed against him, and which he can and ought to forgive me; but the sin that underlies it I confess to no man; it is committed against God, and therefore, like David, I will say, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."

We see in this prescription how strikingly the sin against God is interwoven with, and inseparable from, an injury against a brother. See, too, how very comprehensive the law is:—"shall sin in that which was delivered him to keep." Are you made a trustee?—is property deposited with you?—are you a banker?—has some client left his money in your hands? Then it is your duty to be faithful; it is your duty to remember that the least breach of that trust is injury against your neighbour, and sin against your God. "Or in fellowship"—that is, as we call it in modern days, "in partnership." Are you a partner in a house of business? You are bound to look to your co-partner's interests as if they were your own; and your co-partner is bound to look to your interests just as if they were his. "Or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour," such a one commits sin. "Or hath found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely." Among the Romans, it was always regarded as theft to appropriate anything you found upon the streets, whether you could find the owner of it or not: and this law here says—from which that was evidently a reflection—that if you find anything of which you cannot find the owner, or if you find anything, and know the owner, and either conceal it, or deny it, or swear falsely concerning it, all that is sin against God. "Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is

guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely: he shall even restore it in the principal,"—that is, the sum itself—“and shall add”—not as an atonement, but as what may be fairly due—“the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth.” You recollect the language of Zaccheus was evidently founded upon that:—“The half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold,”—which showed the warmth and fulness of his convictions, because he was only bound to return a fifth of the capital or principal which he had taken away.

And then, not only was he to do so, but he was also to do it at the time of his confession and his trespass-offering made by the priest. The sin was forgiven through the trespass-offering as a type of Christ’s atonement; the injury against the brother was rectified by returning the principal, and a fifth of the principal added to it, and receiving from that brother he had injured his forgiveness. “And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord; and it shall be forgiven him.” The words on which I addressed you the other Sunday are just the echo of this:—“If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” If any man have sinned in any of these respects, and have done something which it is in his power—and this is an accompaniment of true repentance, not a ground of pardon—to reinstate, or restore,

or repair, if practicable, such a one need not doubt that he has forgiveness in Christ for any or for all of those transgressions thus distinctly laid down in this chapter.

The next part of the chapter describes that which relates to the priests and to their offerings. First of all, there is the burnt-offering, as it is called. This burnt-offering, by fire kept constantly burning upon the altar,—“the fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out,”—that fire on the altar was lighted originally from heaven; it was lighted, it is supposed, from the bright glory that was in the cloud, and ultimately dwelt in the Tabernacle between the cherubim; but while lighted from heaven it was kept burning by human appliances. God never dispenses with means; he gives grace, and expects us to use means. So that text that many pervert, “My grace is sufficient for you,” some people practically read as if it were, “My grace is *a substitute* for you.” Now it is not so; it is sufficient for you, but it never will be a substitute for you. God does not canonize indolence. He lights the spark that is in the heart from heaven, and he expects that, by prayer, by reading, by thought, you will keep it constantly burning.

And then you will notice that, by the fire on the altar, which was thus lighted originally from heaven, and kept continually burning, there was offered what was called the morning and evening sacrifice; the morning sacrifice, which was offered up just at sunrise, was a lamb; and the evening sacrifice, a little before sunset, was also a lamb: and that was called the daily offering—the burnt-offering. John evidently

alluded to that—as I think I have remarked before—when he saw at evening the priests carrying the lamb to the Temple to be slain, as the evening offering, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world;” he turned their attention from the literal prefigurative lamb that they were carrying to the literal altar, and directed it to the true Lamb, the antitype, the end of it—the Lord Jesus Christ, who taketh away the sins of the world.

You can see in this book, too, the origin of those distorted superstitions that still prevail. It is said that some one calculated the height of the largest Pyramid by its shadow, as any one acquainted with the relation of the sides of a triangle can do. We can calculate the antiquity, depth, and reality, of the truths in this Book, by those dark and deeply distorted shadows projected from it athwart the wide world. I think one of the strongest proofs that this Book is the ancient original, is the distortion that Tradition has made of its every truth; retaining enough of the original to indicate its origin, but mixed up sufficiently with human error to show the frailty of the hands in which it has been carried to a distance. This fire, which was kept continually burning, was the origin of the fire that was worshipped by the Persian Magi, or by those called in modern times Parsees. It was also the origin of what was called the “vestal fire” in Roman heathendom, where were the vestal virgins; that vestal fire being said to have originated from heaven, and to be kept continually and supernaturally burning. The Greek word for *Vesta*, is *Esta*, and that word among the Greeks is evidently derived from the Hebrew word *Esh*, which

means "fire;" thus again showing that every distorted heathen superstition had first its origin in inspired truth. Now these and similar things would indicate what an influence this Book has exercised upon the world, and how much the world is indebted to it for truth, whilst to itself it is indebted for all the dark distortions which it has canonized.

We have next, the rites for the consecration of the priest himself—a very interesting part of this Book—where the offerings of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer, are laid down. You will notice one distinction here very remarkable. When offerings were made for the people, the priests ate of the offerings: "They which minister at the altar, live by the altar;" but when an offering was made for the priests, the priests did not taste it, but the whole of it was utterly and entirely burned. Now this evidently shows that the priests, when they ate of the offerings of the people, typically for the sins of the people, it was meant to show that the priest took upon him the people's sins, and made offering for them, eating being incorporation: "he made offering," says Paul, "first for his own sins, then for the sins of the people." But when an offering was made for the priest, there was none to bear his sin, and therefore the whole thing was consumed; and no one was allowed, in any shape, or on any pretence, to partake of it: "it shall be wholly burnt; it is a statute for ever."

The rest of this chapter treats of the offering that was to be made at the consecration of the priest: the subsequent chapters treat of the office and the functions he was appointed to fulfil.

The whole of this chapter is full of very valuable

evangelical instruction, and highly illustrative of the gospel of Christ. "No sentiment should be more deeply engraven upon our hearts than that a sin against our neighbour is a trespass against God. So David says, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight,'—though his offence was primarily committed against Uriah.

"'Or have found that which was lost.' The judgment of every honest mind is, that he who finds any lost property, and makes not all due inquiry to ascertain the owner, should in equity be treated as a thief.

(5, 6.) "'Shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish.' By this precept we are again taught that disobedience to God is the great evil even of those crimes which are injurious to man, and that repentance, and even restitution, though needful, in order to forgiveness, cannot atone for sin.

(12.) "As the priest was to renew the fire upon the altar every morning, and to guard with the utmost care against its going out, so our first work with the return of the morning light, should be that the fire of holy love be kindled afresh in our hearts, and through the day our study should be to keep it constantly burning.

(22.) "'And the priest shall offer it.' The benefits of Christ's atonement, in order to be available, must be *personally* apprehended. However intrinsically sufficient for the salvation of all men, none will be the better for it who do not for themselves make use of it. The offending priest, or ruler, or common person, must *himself* bring his sin-offering, must lay *his own* hands upon its head, must thus show how nearly he

felt *himself* to be concerned in the ceremony; and every sinner now must individually bring this sacrifice of Christ, in faith, as the atonement for his own sin. He must not rest in the mere generality that ‘we are all sinners,’ and ‘Christ died for all.’ He must feel and apply all this to himself. He must in effect say, ‘Lord, I am indeed a sinner; a great and grievous sinner against thee; but here is my sin-offering; here is the sacrifice of thine own blessed Son; here is the atonement of thine appointment; this I bring to thee with my soul’s approval, and my heart’s desire that it may be accepted by thee, and put away all my sin.’ ”

Here, too, we learn how truly our Lord spake when he said, “Moses wrote of me.” These types and rites are the syllables of his glorious Name. They met at Calvary.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL SCRIPTURE INSTRUCTIVE. ADAM THE FIRST PRIEST. EUCHARISTIC OFFERINGS. VOTIVE OFFERINGS. JACOB'S VOW.

I KNOW it seems a most uninteresting thing to read these minute prescriptions respecting the slaughter of victims and the offering of sacrifices ; but if God saw it to be good for his glory, and good for us, to inspire this record, I do not see that we are warranted in passing by it, or the least portion of his word ; or in supposing that either it is in every sense inapplicable to us, or that it does not, or should not, belong to the volume in which it is contained. We are certain that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God ; and while each piece of Scripture is not equally suitable or equally profitable everywhere, and in all circumstances, any more than one medicine is suitable in, or a cure for, all diseases, as common sense shows, we yet hold, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is somewhere, or in some cases, or under some circumstances, profitable, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work. Besides, I do not see why the naturalist, for instance, or the philosopher, should on these grounds quarrel with such chapters as these. We do not find that the true naturalist despises anything that he finds in the

world of nature, in the vegetable world, in the mineral kingdom, or in the sky above, or in the geological *strata* or stony page of the earth. On the contrary, he thinks nothing unclean, nothing unfit for study and investigation. It has been actually found, that the most apparently worthless things are, even when examined and thoroughly understood, really most precious. The sea-weed, long thought worthless, has furnished one of the most valuable medicines; and things that have long been trodden upon, and considered useless, have turned out, when properly understood, to have important and valuable purposes. And if it be true philosophy to hold nothing that God has made unworthy of study, it is at least true religion to hold nothing that God has inspired unworthy of our understanding and investigation.

In this chapter there seem to be some parts not very instructive to us, and yet there are allusions that are very suggestive of useful thought. For instance, in the eighth verse it is stated, that when the priest "offereth any man's burnt-offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt-offering which he hath offered." The moment I read that, my thoughts travelled backwards to Adam in Paradise. You recollect that, after he had laid aside the fig-tree leaves, with which he tried to clothe his body, foolishly supposing it was his body that was at fault, whilst it was the inhabitant within that had set all wrong outside—when he had laid aside the fig-tree leaves, God clothed him, it is said, with skins. No animal food was then eaten. These skins belonged to expiatory victims. What does that teach us? As the skin of the sacrifice was the property of the priest that offered

it, we gather from this alone, that the animals that were slain in Paradise were slain in sacrifice ; and that the skins that Adam put on were the skins of victims, slaughtered as typical of the great atonement that should be made in the fulness of the times ; and also that Adam, after he fell, was not only the first sinner upon earth, but also the first priest upon earth that offered up a sacrifice in its way expiatory for the sins of mankind.

We find in the twelfth verse another class of offerings, that are very interesting, called eucharistic, or thanksgiving offerings :—“ If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes.” Now, this eucharistic peace-offering is an offering still obligatory upon us, not in form, for that would be Jewish, but in substance, which is Christian and everlasting. The Apostle Paul tells us, “ By Christ, the altar, let us offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving continually.” Now such language, used by the apostle, would be almost inexplicable, except we look at it in the light of Leviticus, where we find the eucharistic or thanksgiving peace-offering presented on the altar by the priest, in favour of a heart, that wished to unload itself of the gratitude it felt to God for his mercies. The Apostle Paul, with the Levitical economy before him, says so beautifully, “ By him, therefore”—no longer by the altar in the tabernacle, or the altar in the temple, but by Christ, the true altar—let us offer not the eucharistic offerings here of oil, and cake, and ram without blemish, but “ the sacrifice of thanksgiving continually.” And at the dawn of one year, and at the close of another, just ended, let us offer what Israel did—we doing it

in spirit, they doing it in the letter—the eucharistic offering of thanksgiving and praise to God. Recollect all the mercies you have received, all the privileges you have enjoyed, all the blessings you have reaped; and that man must have a very insensible heart who does not feel any, and a very blind mind who does not see any, and a very unsanctified heart who is unthankful for those he does see, and those he does feel. Let us, at the commencement of one year, and the close of another, recognise the good hand of God in all the bright and blessed enjoyments of the past, and often look back, when we can look back dispassionately and impartially, to see in life's most shaded and obscure places, in its saddest and most sorrowful windings, the wise, the merciful, the gracious leading of our Father who is in heaven. Just read at your leisure the 107th Psalm, and you will find in it strings of mercies, always closing with an incentive to eucharistic offerings. "Oh! that man would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works unto the children of men." Or read that no less beautiful string—better than a string of beads—a string of blessings, called the 103rd Psalm; and then, after each, call upon all to bless the Lord, but, secondly, each one to ask his own soul, "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Let me notice again another allusion—very precious, very instructive—and that is, in the 15th verse, where, if any of the sacrifice remained, it was to be eaten the same day that it was offered. Now, in that there is a very seasonable and wise provision, because if it had not been eaten the same day on which it was offered, it would have been kept and used as a charm, or as an amulet and as a sort of guard or protection, just as is

done now in the Church of Rome, where the consecrated bread, or “host,” as they call it, is kept in a *pyx*, or in a box, preserved as in a safeguard, and there kept within walls, under lock and key, lest what they believe to be God should be stolen or taken away. And I think that is a very Protestant thought in one of the rubrics, if I mistake not, of the Church of England Communion Service, that at the close, as it is also done in our own church, after all the communicants have partaken, if there be any bread and wine left, it is not to be burnt, as some foolish and conceited and ignorant priests in the West say, nor is it to be poured down a place specially appointed for that purpose, called a *piscina*, under special form and ceremony, but the poor of the congregation are to be called together, and they are decently to eat the bread and drink the wine. Now, I can conceive no more fatal blow to transubstantiation than that law; and it is impossible, while it exists, that transubstantiation can be openly preached. It is common bread and common wine, when all have communicated; and it always should be eaten, not left to the next day, which would be opening the door for the amulets, the charms, and all the other nonsense which has been grafted upon Christianity—not to say nonsense, but blasphemous heresy, which has been grafted upon Christianity in the Church of Rome.

One other verse I allude to, and I have done. It is the sixteenth verse, where it says, “If the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day”—that is to say, there were not only eucharistic, or thanksgiving offerings, which the people of God were to present on a review

of a past year, or a past month, or a good harvest, or great profits, by their honest and industrious labours, but they also made offerings that were purely voluntary and votive. Now at the close of one year, we ought not only to thank God for what is past; but, if it be in your power, in this cold and piercing weather there will be plenty around you whose silent misery will plead with the greatest eloquence, to whom you can, each in his own neighbourhood, give a gift-offering, expressive of your gratitude. The word "offering," translated into modern language, would be a "Christmas-box" given to the poor. That is our modern phrase for an ancient law in the Bible: it is the giving something of our plenty to those that are poor and needy, as expressions of our good feeling to them, and of our thankfulness to God. But I alluded also to the votive offerings—that is to say, that during the year that is to come, you will perform this, or that you will do that, or that you will give up that little luxury, that you may benefit others, or you will undertake this duty, that you may do good to those that are around you. Every man may see in the year that has commenced many gaps, and openings, and nooks, and niches, that his liberality may fill; and you will find that you will never be less happy or less rich by dealing your bread to the hungry, your raiment to the naked, and hiding not yourselves from your own flesh. As a specimen, however, of a votive offering, I read that very beautiful one of Jacob, where it says, "And Jacob vowed a vow." Now here is the eucharistic vow: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come

again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God ; and this stone, which I have set a pillar, shall be God's house ; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Now that is a votive—a eucharistic votive offering. I know some have misapprehended its meaning, as if Jacob had said, " Well, if God will give me so much, then I will give him so much in return." But that is not the meaning of the passage ; it is literally, " Then if this be true, as I know it is,—if that God will be my God ; if indeed he will lead me, as he has promised to lead me, in this way that I go ; and if he will thus give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on ; if he will be so good a God to me,—then the least that I can do is to express my gratitude to him, by offering a continual eucharistic and votive offering to Him who is my merciful and gracious deliverer."

Thus God was always recognised as the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and man is no less urgently educated to express his dependence and gratitude to Him. May thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, add to these other gifts and graces to us a grateful heart !

CHAPTER VIII.

SACRED PERSONS. AARON'S CONSECRATION. LEVITICUS AND EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. MOSES CONCERNED IN THE CONSECRATION OF AARON. CONVOCATIONS. WASHING WITH WATER. SANDALS. TRUE RELIGION HAS VARIABLE RITES AND FIXED MORAL AND SPIRITUAL TRUTHS.

THE consecration of Aaron was altogether a most impressive scene. In the back-ground is seen Mount Sinai, silent and shrouded, as if it had never burned with fire, or echoed along its gorges a solemn decalogue: around were the rich pastures of its slopes, stretching away far before their desert march. In the holy tabernacle, raised by a people's liberality, was Aaron consecrated the first high priest; and clothed with robes of beauty, and of glory, in the presence of all the people. In former chapters, you will recollect we have had very minute descriptions of the consecration of sacred things; in this, however, and in some that follow, we have a description of the consecration of sacred persons. This chapter begins an account of the consecration of Aaron—the first high priest in the ancient Jewish economy—to that lofty office, which lasted, with more or less of corruption cleaving to it, till the Jewish high priest, the shadow, was merged in Christ, the universal High Priest, who liveth and reigneth a priest and a king

upon his throne for ever and ever. Now the reason why these chapters are so important is just this: you never can understand the offices of our Blessed Redeemer, unless you will read and study them in the light of Leviticus; and you never will understand Leviticus, its moral and weighty significance, till you read it in the light of Christ, our Great High Priest. The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Book of Leviticus are the lock and the key; the one opening the other, and each casting light, and illustration, and harmony upon the other. In Leviticus you have Christ in shadow,—the shadowy outline in which he was revealed to God's ancient people, or his Church in its infancy. In the Epistle to the Hebrews you have the shadowy outline of Leviticus absorbed and lost, or rather filled up, with the everlasting and glorious substance, and illuminated by his light. Now Aaron, and his priesthood, were typical of Christ, and his unchangeable and everlasting priesthood; and the very fact that the Aaronitic priesthood was typical of Christ's, is proof sufficient that there is no priesthood existing in the Christian ministry now: it was fully exhausted in Christ; it was merged in him when he lived, and died, and rose again; and it is pronounced by an apostle to be so completely associated with Christ, as to be an intransferable priesthood. There may, therefore, be a teacher, a presbyter, an ambassador in the Christian Church; but a sacrificing priest there cannot be without misleading souls, and doing dishonour to Christ, the only Priest of our profession, and ignoring the New Testament.

Now the induction or consecration of Aaron was,

we are told, carried on, and almost conferred by Moses. I think, to the extreme High Church party, what is contained in this chapter must be very startling; for the first high priest was plainly consecrated and set apart to his office by a layman. Moses was a layman. True, he acted by God's command; true, everything he said was by the authority of God, and what he had said to him; but still here is a fact:—it was Moses that sprinkled the altar; it was Moses that “took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar, round about with his finger;” it was Moses that “took the blood, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.” Thus, then, God gave a layman authority and jurisdiction of the very highest description in the Christian temple. It may be called the very essence of Erastianism—it may shock many now as an interference with sacred offices; but it suggests useful truths. In the history of the Church of Christ, for the last eighteen centuries, priests have often corrupted it, and laymen have often purified it. It is a melancholy fact, that the great introducers of errors have not been generally the laity: they have had their share; but the priests, or the ministry so called, have introduced far more errors, and said more subtle things to defend them, in one century, than all the laity have said for eighteen; and I do therefore feel, from the precedents that are before me, and from other facts, as it seems to me that we have less to fear from the lay element in the Christian Church than we have from the ecclesiastical; and I have always rejoiced to see the lay element mixed up with the ecclesiastical,

in order, among other objects, to keep the ecclesiastical element right. It is a melancholy fact, that every profession—and so far, of course, the ministry of the Gospel is itself a profession—that is the lowest sense, but it is a sense—is very prone to magnify itself,—very prone to exalt its own claims, and therefore it needs the diluting presence of other and resistent elements to keep it in order. Hence, I always have thought, that in the Scottish Church, for instance, where the laity is mixed with the clergy, there is a most precious provision. And if ever what is called a Convocation be restored in this country—and if restored at the present time, I believe it would do incalculable mischief, because it is well known that a portion are what are called semi-papists, being papists in all but the name; and I fear, with all respect for that church, that the minority are those who love and preach Bible and evangelical Christianity. If, therefore, a Convocation were restored, and restored on the Tractarian type and model, the consequence would be that every pious man would be thrust out, and there would be an Anglo-Catholic ecclesiastical corporation, munificently endowed, which would crush the liberty and injure the influence of living religion. As soon as the evangelical element has got the ascendancy, then will be the time for the Convocation to be restored; and if ever it be restored, it ought to be a *sine quā non* that laymen shall constitute at least one-third of it; if they do not, the mischief will be incalculable and unspeakable; nothing but Hildebrandism of the very worst stamp can advocate an institution composed exclusively of the clergy, to determine all

questions, and to put an end as they call it to all disputes.

Here then we have a lay element introducing a high clerical one; or, Moses, by God's command, consecrating and anointing Aaron to the high and holy office which he held.

We notice, too, that on this occasion, when Aaron was consecrated, "the whole congregation was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle." Now that seems to me a very beautiful *trait*. It does seem to me that in the Christian church in modern times, when a minister is ordained, it should not be in the presence of ministers only, but in the face of the whole congregation. When Aaron was consecrated, the whole congregation were assembled as witnesses, as well as to join in supplication for a blessing on his head.

You will notice, too, in the consecration of Aaron in the sixth verse, the special importance attached to washing with water. Tradition has carefully preserved this rite. I have often made the remark, that whenever you see a bad sovereign it is an argument for the existence somewhere of a good one. There cannot be a forged thing or a mockery without the original. Wherever you find a practice in tradition—in the traditional history of mankind—analogous to what you find in this book, you will see it is the distorted remains of what was revealed to Moses in the ancient Levitical economy. This washing with water, which was first introduced and instituted here, was a practice that subsequently prevailed among all religions, as may be proved in ancient and modern times. The Egyptians subsequently, I believe, and

not antecedently to this—the Egyptian priests always washed twice a day in water ; the Greeks had their sprinklings, the Romans their lustrations with water ; the Romish church has retained a shadow of this, in what is called “ holy water,” or, in the priest dipping his fingers in water, before he officiates at the altar. In fact, you will find much of the ceremonial at the consecration of Aaron in the practice of the Romish church. If you will open the *Pontificale Romanum*, or the *Ceremoniale Romanum*, you will find there almost all the ceremonies that were employed in the Levitical economy at the consecration of Aaron, in the consecration of a modern Romish priest or bishop. You ask, then, Is it not very scriptural ? I answer, No ; but quite the reverse : because it is copied from these ceremonies, therefore it is unscriptural. You ask, Why ? Because all these are met and exhausted as types and symbols in Christ the substance ; and to introduce them into the Christian church now, is to forget that eighteen centuries have elapsed ; that Christ, upon the cross, cried, “ It is finished ! ” and that Aaron, and Moses, and Levi, were buried with Christ,—only Christ rose from the dead,—and they, with their wasted and worn-out robes, have been left to moulder behind. To be scriptural is not to copy the letter, but to copy the spirit as well as the letter of the word of God. To wear Aaron’s mitre is not to have Aaron’s succession, but to practise a worthless and an unmeaning ceremony ; to have the washings, and dippings, and sprinklings that he had, though in the letter it looks like what is enjoined here, is in spirit altogether incompatible with it ; for our High Priest is in the holy place, and God now seeketh not

this mount nor that mount, but true Christians, in spirit and in truth, to worship him.

So, again, the Mahometans practise frequent ablutions before they enter their mosques, and the Hindoos almost worship the water of the holy Ganges, and look upon ablutions in it as of special value. Now all these are the distorted remains, the distorted relics of an ancient truth, floating like driftwood on the waves of time, and reminding us of the grand spiritual rites, instituted by God himself, of which they are the broken and dismantled fragments.

You will find another feature here which has often been noticed. In all the furniture, on all the ornaments appointed for Aaron—the mitre for his head, the golden plate, the holy crown, the breast-plate, the Urim and the Thummim, the ephod and the girdle, and all the other robes,—there is no mention of sandals; and we are led from this and other passages to infer, that the ancient Jewish priests always offered their sacrifices with their feet bare. We should come to this conclusion, not only from this omission of sandals or coverings for the feet in the Levitical inventory, but from traditional remains in other countries also. For instance, in the temple of Diana, in ancient Rome, the priests and priestesses had always to enter with bare feet. The Mahometan leaves his slippers behind him when he goes into the mosque; and the Abyssinian Christian, it is very singular, at the present day, always leaves his shoes or his slippers outside when he goes into a Christian temple; and the Brahmins whenever they enter a temple always go in with their feet naked. It may be that this is the remains of an ancient form. When a person in this country

wishes to show courtesy to a superior or to an equal, or to fulfil the ordinary courtesies of life, he takes off his hat. This is our western and northern habit. But an eastern would retain his hat, or his turban, or his fez, or whatever it may be, and would take off his slippers or his sandals as a mark of respect and courtesy to you. What does all this teach us? That outward customs vary with latitude and longitude, but interior character lasts for ever. And I think it is one of the grand and striking proofs of the reality and divinity of our blessed religion, that it has made essentials fixed like the stars in their orbits, but left the circumstantial of religion floating, and dishevelled, and variable, as the clouds in the sky. And, because our religion has nothing of the ceremonial rigidity of Mahometanism and Hindooism, and other religions which are local, because of human origin ; but, on the contrary, has made the moral and the spiritual immutable, but left the ceremonial all variable, therefore we infer from this alone, that it must have God for its author, truth for its matter, inspiration for its beginning, glory to God, with happiness to mankind, as its blessed issue.

The consecration of Aaron, which lasted seven days, and was therefore perfect, is frequently alluded to in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in connexion with our High Priest. The Greek word, which means to make perfect, is used in the Septuagint for consecration. Keeping this in view, we understand Jesus made perfect by suffering, that is, he reached the fulfilment of his fitness for his office.

Abraham's faith by his work was made perfect,

(Jas..ii. 22) that is, attained its end and vindicated its reality.

Heb. v. 9. Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

CHAPTER IX.

RECAPITULATION. AARON ENTERS ON HIS OFFICE. HIS PERFECTION. AARON'S FIRST SACRIFICE. THE APPEARANCE OF JEHOVAH. THE PRIESTLY BENEDICTION.

You will recollect the great truth I have endeavoured to inculcate, that God designs by line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little, to impress upon the hearts and consciences of all humanity that there could be forgiveness, pardon of sin, acceptance before God for a fallen family, only through the shedding of the precious blood of One who should die, the just for the unjust, a perfect propitiation and sacrifice, in the fulness of the times. We all know quite well, that in order to make a lesson deeply felt it must be frequently repeated. So God frequently repeats, and minutely describes, these offerings and sacrifices, and the significant accompaniments of them, which were calculated to teach and train the people in the great truth that there was something wrong between humanity and God, and that there could be pardon only in some way that should vindicate the justice as well as convey the mercy of Him that pardoned, and create in the heart of the pardoned gratitude and responsive love. In order also to make

them long for the glorious Deliverer, he made them feel at the very time that they offered these sacrifices that the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, never could really take away sin, and that therefore they must look above them and beyond them, and cry for something the same in kind, but of infinite efficacy, described so briefly and so beautifully by the evangelist, when he says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin."

In the second place, I think I have vindicated before, the ceaseless reiteration of these varied sacrifices and the existence of them, so far as they can be vindicated, with regard to those who are enamoured of everything Greek and Roman, but shrink with wonderful dismay from everything Jewish and Levitical. Now I stated on a former occasion, that there were the same sacrifices among the Romans, the same among the Greeks, but accompanied with barbarous and repulsive rites that were altogether strange to the heaven-taught Jew; and that if it be just reason to object to the Jewish economy that such rites and sacrifices as these prevailed, there is, *a fortiori*, a stronger reason still to object to the most accomplished Greeks and Romans for the repulsive and horrible sacrifices and offerings which they were in the habit of making. But in the one case, in the Jew, we have expressly Divine prescription; in the case of the Roman and the Greek we have that original divine prescription distorted, perverted, and corrupted, by the traditions of man.

In this chapter we have the continuation of that most interesting ceremony which was begun in the previous chapter—namely, the consecration of

Aaron to be the high priest, with all the accompaniments of that sublime and impressive function. You will see the vast importance of reading this from the fact that, if you open the Epistle to the Hebrews you will be utterly unable to understand the most precious and the most distinctive truths of Christianity, unless you have studied and read the sacrifices and the priesthood of the Levitical economy. You have here the shadow of a great Original; the dim prefigurations of Him that was to come in the fulness of the times; and all the statements respecting Christ in the New Testament are made on the supposition that you are acquainted with the Old; they are allusive to the Old, and there is no understanding the New Testament except you have thoroughly understood and studied the Old. No man can see the connexion of the Epistle to the Hebrews unless he has read the writings of Moses in Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, and Numbers; and you will never see the beauty, the perfection, and the glory of Christ, the Great High Priest, until you have read the accompaniments of the consecration, dedication, and functions of Aaron, the typical high priest.

In this chapter we read first of all, that "on the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel." During seven days the rites that accompanied the consecration of Aaron lasted; on the eighth day, the first day after his consecration had been completed, he was ready to enter upon the great functions of his office. Now the number seven is always used among the Jews, and constantly in the Old and New Testament, as the great type of that which is perfect. We read of seven days

in the week, a complete period; seven years, a complete period; seven times seven, the year of jubilee; the "seven Spirits," representing the one Holy Spirit; "the seven stars," or "the seven angels," representative of the complete ministry of the Church of Christ. And so throughout the Bible you will find the number seven constantly identified with perfection. Now this high priest, Aaron, was here consecrated during seven days, that he might be perfect; so the allusions in the Epistle to the Hebrews are in such words as these: "He hath made the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering;" that is an allusion to the perfect consecration of Aaron, who was seven days in being consecrated, and then was thoroughly equipped for his office. So Jesus, the Captain of our faith, was made perfect, that is, completely consecrated, in all respects answering to the type; in all respects fitted for the great work of being the Great High Priest of his people Israel.

Again, you will notice here that the first sacrifice that Aaron was commanded to offer *was* the sacrifice of a slain calf. Some have thought that there is here, underlying the prescription, an allusion to his great sin when he made the representation of a calf out of the golden trinkets of the people, and made the people bow down and worship it; and that here the appointment of a calf to be a sacrifice, when he entered on his office, had underlying it an allusion and reference to that great sin of which Aaron, as the leader of the people, had on one occasion been guilty.

We then read, in the fourth verse, that he was to offer these sacrifices, and that "to-day the Lord will appear unto you." I explained on a former occasion,

that the glory that marched through the desert in the shape of a pillar of fire by night was the *shechinah*, or the splendid evidence of the presence of God. We then find that when the Tabernacle was built, this glory, or *shechinah*, rested between the cherubim on the mercy-seat; and when Moses therefore stated that God should appear to Aaron, it is not that God the Father should be made visible, but that the *shechinah*, or the splendour—the celestial splendour, the unearthly brightness kindled from heaven and kept bright and burning by a ceaseless miracle—should appear in the presence of the people, and show that the offering was accepted, and that the offerer was fit for his office.

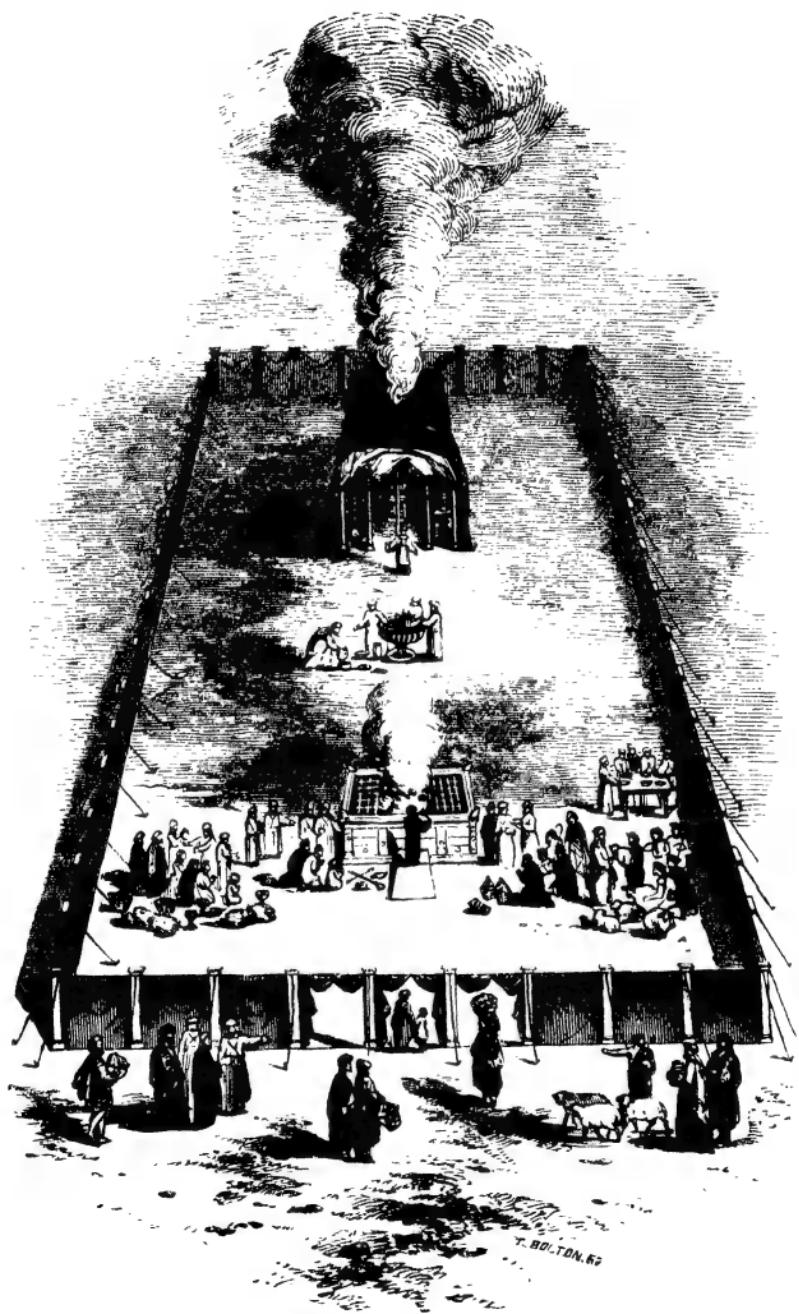
We see that when Aaron here offered he was to offer first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. Now we read, in contrast, but allusive contrast to this, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Jesus needed not to offer first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people; but the true High Priest had no sins to offer for, and therefore his offering was exclusively and wholly for the benefit and for the blessing of the people.

We notice in the 15th verse that “he brought the people’s offering, and took the goat which was the sin-offering for the people.” Wherever you find the word “sin-offering” in this chapter, it is literally the translation of the Hebrew word for sin; and this will explain to you instantly how completely the sin-offering was identified with the sin of the offerer. The animal slain was typically made the sin of the slayer of it; and the idea designed to be conveyed was that the sins of the offerer were transferred to the victim;

and that when the victim was slain, and its blood shed, the offerer's sins were annihilated and he forgiven. Well now this phraseology is beautifully applied to our blessed Lord in 2 Corinthians v. 21: "God hath made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God by him." That is, just as the victim under Levi had the sin of the people cast upon it, and its death was assumed to be the annihilation of that sin, so when you, the chiefest of sinners, believe on Christ the only Saviour, your sin is so transferred to him, and laid upon him, and identified with him, that you receive the blessedness of that man whose transgression is forgiven, whose iniquities are pardoned, and to whom the Lord imputeth no sin. It is then that Christ becomes the great sin-bearer of his people—is made sin for his people; and you will never appreciate clearly the doctrine of justification by faith, or feel its blessedness and its peace, till you have contrasted Christ's sacrifice, and Christ the Priest, with the sacrifices and the priesthood of the Levitical economy.

Moses on this occasion accompanied Aaron into the holy of holies. This was contrary to the law in most cases; but Moses, being here the great medium of teaching to Aaron and to all the people what was God's will, was authorized—and not only authorized, but it was his duty—to go into the holy place upon this occasion along with Aaron, and teach him.

We read in the next place of the glory of God appearing when Aaron came out and blessed the people. "And the glory of the Lord,"—that is the *shechinah*,—"appeared unto all the people;" and, lastly,



THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

CHAPTER X.

A SOLEMN JUDGMENT. DEATH OF THE SONS OF AARON. EXCESS OF WINE. STRANGE FIRE: ITS MEANING. REASONS OF PUNISHING AARON'S SILENCE. GOD SPEAKS TO AARON. HEBREW THE PRIMEVAL TONGUE. HIGH PRIEST'S DUTIES.

AMIDST the joyous scenes recorded in the previous chapter, when the priests of the Most High presented their offerings to the Lord with all acceptance, and when God blessed them, and made permanent his institutions and his ordinances for their comfort and progress—amidst all these scenes of joyful and grateful recollections, there occurs one painful, solemn, and strikingly impressive incident presented in the opening words of this chapter. We have an account of these two sons of Aaron in a previous part of Exodus; where we read, “Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.” But how sad and melancholy it is that those who had been blessed with the most exalted privileges, should be first signalized as enduring, and receiving unto their souls, the most exterminating judgments! It seems as if it was an illustration of that awful saying of Peter, “If judg-

ment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of them that receive not the Gospel?"—that is, if God thus chasten part of the misconduct of his own, how severely will he punish the awful sins and final unbelief of them that receive not the Gospel! It seems from the statement in the ninth and tenth verses of this chapter, that one cause, at least, of their great sin—great, because of the circumstances in which they were placed, and the dignity and rank they sustained—was excess of wine. In the ninth verse of this chapter we are told that the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when thou goest into the tabernacle of the congregation." Now this command immediately succeeding the judgment that here overtook the sons of Aaron, would seem to imply that they must have drunk wine to excess, and thereby erred in the duties, and laws, and requirements of the public worship of God. At the same time, the actual sin itself—the sin expressly so called—was that they offered "strange fire" in their censers. This reminds us that there were two things that were essential in the institutions of Aaron; first, that the sacrifice should be offered only upon one altar—the great type of Christ, the true Sacrifice; secondly, that the incense—the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving—should be burned in a censer that contained coals of fire taken from the fire that was originally kindled from heaven; to represent that not only are we to offer our prayers in the name of Christ, but we are also to seek that those prayers may be inspired by the Holy Spirit of God in our hearts. Prayer that is offered in any other name than Christ's

cannot be accepted ; and the prayer that is suggested in the heart by any but the Spirit of God, revealing to God our deep wants, and interceding within us, in the language of the apostle, "with groanings that cannot be uttered," never will be accepted before God.

This punishment that fell upon the two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, seems a very severe punishment. But you will notice that the high and dignified position they occupied, made sin, in their case, far more grievous, and calculated to do much more extensive mischief among Israel, than if it had been perpetrated by some one occupying a less conspicuous and a lowlier position in the state. Though sin is in itself always the same, yet, committed in the high places of the land by those who occupy in Church or in State, lofty and responsible positions, it has an aggravation and an enormity that it has not when committed by those who occupy lowlier and obscurer spheres in the land. Not that the sin differs in its absolute and personal guilt, but that it differs in the influence it spreads around it. Evil in high places is very contagious—is seen by many, and imitated by more. And, because these two sons of Aaron occupied high and responsible positions in the arrangements of Israel, their sin required to be signally punished, that all might see how evil and bitter a thing it is to depart from the commands of God. And, in the next place, this was the commencement of a new economy. The commander of an army, or the commander of a fleet, must insist upon rigid discipline at the commencement of the military expedition, or of the sailing of the fleet ; if he do not, the issue is disastrous to the soldiers and the sailors, as it will be

injurious to great interests and painful to him. Therefore, at the commencement of a new economy, it was requisite that it should be seen that the least of God's laws may not be transgressed with impunity; and that the authority of God alone, struck upon the least and the loftiest, must be the great reason why there should be instant, unqualified, and undiluted obedience.

When Aaron heard this, and saw his two sons struck dead, it is said in most eloquent and instructive language,—“And Aaron held his peace.” He had nothing to say—even the affection of a parent was repelled by the sense of justice entertained in the bosom of the high priest of Israel.

We find that after this scene, God speaks now, not to Moses, as he had heretofore done, but to Aaron. Heretofore God spoke to Moses to give instruction to Aaron; but, evidently as an expression of deep sympathy with parental feeling, in the eighth verse of this chapter, for the first time, he ceases to give directions through Moses—the prime minister of that economy—and speaks directly, face to face, to Aaron the high priest, as if to comfort and cheer him under so painful and severe a trial. Some have said, as we have already noticed, that the special reason here—that one great cause why these two sons of Aaron thus transgressed the law—was their drinking wine and strong drink. The prohibition, therefore, now given was absolute in the case of all the priests and ministers of Israel. It is not absolute in our case; although I do not believe that society would suffer very much if it were absolutely obligatory. When we read of the excesses that take place in these things, one is almost

tempted at times to wish that alcohol were banished from society, or restricted to druggists' shops, and to be partaken of only under the sanction of physicians' prescriptions. Still we may not do away with what God has given as a good gift; we may not do away with the use of wine because men abuse it. The fact is, it is not by outward mechanical restrictions that men are changed, but it is only by an inner, moral transformation; a drunkard without principle will be drunk if he drink from a wine bottle; another man, who hates drunkenness, will not be drunk if he drink from a wine cask. The change that is wanted, therefore, is not an outer, mechanical, coercive restriction; but the introduction into the heart of man of those mighty principles that teach us and train us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

In speaking of the word which is here translated "strong drink," I may notice that it is one of those expressions that seem to be preserved in so many languages. I think I have noticed before, that the word "wine" is almost the same in every language under the sun. I noticed before, too, the very singular fact, that the word "sack," referred to in a previous part, is the same in almost every language. So the Hebrew word translated "strong drink" seems to have become very much incorporated with other languages. The Hebrew word is *shakar*; and this word at this moment is used in India to denote a strong drink. In the Greek it is *σικερα*; in the Latin it is *sicera*; and in the English it is supposed to have found its rest finally in the word "cider," expressive of an intoxicating, though not a very intoxicating, drink. And from the same word comes our word

"sugar," or the element of sweetness; showing how singularly a word can be traced to its original derivation, coming down through successive languages. But when you ascend from the English to the Latin, from the Latin to the Greek, and from these to the Hebrew, there you stop; and what does that show? That the Hebrew is the primitive language; that all the rest are broken fragments and dislocated parts of a great primal tongue; in other words, proving what the most accomplished ethnologists have triumphantly proved, that all the languages upon earth give token of a common origin; but give evidence, too, that they have suffered some great dislocation in their transmission.

We can see, then, from the whole of this chapter, first, how joyous scenes may be darkened and made sorrowful by sin. Secondly, we learn from this chapter how sinful it is to worship God, or to seek to serve him, in any other spirit or in any other manner than that which he himself has laid down. We learn next, that God's name is ever to be sanctified and to be had in reverence by all them that draw near to him.

One other thing I have not noticed, that is, the command to the high priest not to uncover his head. The high priest was ordered not to mourn for any, or put on the tokens and weeds of mourning; as if he were to be insulated from all the rest by the dignity, the responsibility, and the gravity of his office.

Are our eyes on the altar of sacrifice, waiting for the everlasting Priest to come out and bless us? "To them that look for him he will come a second time without sin unto salvation."

Human life is full of lights and shadows—the sunshine of to-day is lost in the clouds of the morrow.

The peace of half a century is suddenly broken by the sounds of war. Judgments follow mercies. In all times, however prosperous, it becomes us to rejoice with trembling.

We see how sacredly God preserved the very forms of his service in ancient times. It was sin to do what he commanded not, as it was to do what he had positively forbidden. He looks now rather to the heart than to the outward mode of expressing its inward feelings. But still he will not suffer his holy ordinances to be profaned, or his worship to be corrupted and debased by superstition. No altar sanctifies the gift but Christ. No strange fire must inspire the heart, but the presence of the Holy Spirit of God. As Nadab and Abihu found their punishment to spring directly from their sin, so still God makes the iniquities of his people the rods with which they are chastened.

The awful solemnity felt in the heart of Aaron, the father of the sufferers, is expressed in the words—“Aaron held his peace.” He saw the justice and necessity of this terrible example. His heart bled, but his lips were dumb. The prohibition that followed, not to uncover their heads, or rend their garments, in token of sorrow, was to teach that the glory of God must supersede all personal feeling.

I have attended to the probable elements of the crime of which the sons of Aaron were guilty. It is very difficult to determine its nature. Perhaps the most correct estimate is the following, given by Bush the American annotator, in his valuable notes on this chapter:—

“There is some reason to suppose that, apart from

the quality of the fire which they brought, there was a rash intrusion, and a reckless irregularity in their going forward to officiate at the time, and in the manner they did. The whole transaction, as recorded, has an air of abruptness and precipitancy, as if they rushed upon the service without waiting for instructions, either from Moses or Aaron; and as if they were encroaching upon the functions of the high-priest. If by the phrase ‘offered before the Lord,’ be meant, as some suppose, that they advanced within the Most Holy Place, and there presumed to offer incense before the Shekinah, this certainly was a bold invasion of Aaron’s prerogative, and one that would of course expose them to be at once cut off for their hardihood. This idea receives some countenance from Lev. xvi. 1, 2, where we are told that ‘the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord, and died: and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail, before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.’ Whether this be the correct inference or not, we have no evidence from any other part of the ritual that more than *one* priest was to officiate in burning incense at the same time, and here they are represented as entering *together* upon a service to which it does not appear that *either* of them was now called.

“ But laying aside everything that is uncertain in the affair, we find a definite and aggravated offence laid to their charge. They sinned by offering a strange fire before the Lord. Instead of filling their censers with coals from the altar, where a supernatu-

ral fire had been kindled from heaven, and which was always to be used in burning incense, they contemptuously disregarded this ordinance, and filled their vessels with common fire. This was the head and front of their offending, whatever minor accessories of guilt may have accompanied it.

"But where, it is said, is this act expressly forbidden? Is it anywhere ordered, in so many words, that only one kind of fire should be employed in the services of the sanctuary? And if there was no express precept violated, wherein consisted the essential criminality of their conduct? In reply to this, we answer: (1.) That in the phrase 'which he commanded not,' we recognize, according to the idiom of the sacred writers, a clear intimation that the thing in question had been *expressly forbidden*. This is the true force of the expression, as we shall evince in our note on the passage. (2.) In Ex. xxx. 9, it is commanded that no 'strange incense' should be presented, and the implication would be inevitable, from the nature of the case, that 'strange fire' was equally contrary to the divine will. But not only so, from Lev. xvi. 12, 13, we learn that on the day of atonement the priest was to 'take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: and he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.' The order contained in this passage was indeed given subsequent to the event we are now considering, but the presumption obviously is, that this was the *standing usage* which had been ordained from the first

institution of the legal rites, and as to which it is not conceivable that Aaron's sons should have been ignorant. And as the fire miraculously kindled on the altar was to be kept perpetually alive, what other inference could have been drawn, than that from this source was all the fire to be derived which was employed in the sacred rites? The fact that we do not meet with any such injunction in express terms, does not at all abate the force of the probability, that they were perfectly aware that such was the will of God in regard to this matter."

CHAPTER XI.

ANIMAL FOOD. ANIMAL SACRIFICES. DISTINCTION OF CREATURES. CHURCH AND STATE. DIETETIC LAWS — THEIR VALUE. INSULATION OF THE JEWS. HOSPITALITY, ITS POWER AND MORAL INFLUENCE.

ALL will readily own that the chapter I have read, is not certainly so instructive to us as individuals, or as members of a brighter and a better dispensation; yet it has, like all parts of the Word of God, its own peculiar and obvious importance. It seems at first sight a distressing thing that God should thus regard any portion of his creatures as in any sense impure and unclean, or still more that he should suffer any portion of his living creatures to be employed for the food of mankind. We find that prior to the Flood animal food was not eaten, nor allowed in the primitive state. The first instance we find of animals slain was in Paradise. When the sun of its innocence set beneath its horizon, we read that then God clothed Adam and Eve with skins; which must have been the skins of animals that were slain for sacrifices, then first instituted, as the case of Abel and of Cain subsequently shows, and not of animals that were eaten as food. But after the Flood, when man seems to have become degenerated, and his vital powers to have been impaired, we find that animal

food was permitted. But being permitted, it was requisite that a young race, without the experience that we have, should be instructed what sorts of food were best on the whole for the nutriment of man. And if this was the only reason—which it was not—it was not unworthy of God, the great Benefactor, to make the distinctions that are here given. Many people have a notion that there is something unworthy, or, if I may not be misunderstood, undignified, in God descending to such paltry regulations, or, as they would call it, to little things. But may not this be proof of his presence? The truth is, I know not whether God is greatest when he wields and wheels the planets in their orbits, or when he clothes the lily with all its loveliness, and finds its daily food for the ephemeral insect that is born and perishes in a day. God's greatest glory is often in his ministry to the minutest things. We call them minute, because, with considerable self-conceit, we make ourselves the standpoint from which we look at everything; that which is very much above ourselves we think very great, and that which is below ourselves we think very little. Whereas the truth is, that the microscope has revealed to man far more stupendous wonders in a drop of water than the telescope has revealed in the starry firmament above him; and we have more majestic footprints of infinite wisdom, beneficence, and power, and love, visible in an atom of dust than in the firmament above us. And, therefore, it was not unworthy of God, who ministers to his creatures the bread of life, to lay down what I may call these dictetic precepts, or such regulations for their nutriment as are given in this and parallel chapters. God wants man

not only to be happy in heaven, but he wants him to be happy on earth ; and he takes the way of making him happy by trying in these rubrics to show him that sin and disobedience to his Word are the spring of misery ; that obedience to God's Word is the source of all true and lasting happiness.

Now these distinctions laid down in this chapter were not instituted strictly at the time specified here. I believe that God took what had been the practice of the patriarchs by his own appointment—mind you, by his own teaching—and incorporated the principles of that practice in this chapter ; because we find in the Book of Genesis, when Noah was told to go into the ark, God said, “ Of every clean beast thou shalt take unto thee by sevens ; ” and every unclean beast again by another number. We thus see that the distinction of classes of animals existed then. Not that really the animal is unclean ; for I may state that the words “ clean ” and “ unclean,” as we shall see in the subsequent chapter that we shall read upon the leprosy, mean, to pronounce clean and unclean.

Having seen that the word “ clean ” is used in this sense, let me proceed to the explanation of the chapter. It begins, first of all, by God speaking not only to Moses, as on former occasions, alone ; nor to Aaron, as on former occasions, alone, but to Moses and Aaron both ; Moses, the representative of the State ; Aaron, the representative of the priesthood. It was a law, therefore, that was to be binding alike upon Church and State, upon priests and princes, upon Moses and upon Aaron both.

The classification that is made here is a most remarkable one. It is not wholly an arbitrary one ; but

evidently a distinction originally inherent in the animal economy. It is matter of fact in nature itself, and it has been remarked by some eminent critics of the rationalistic school, how amazing that Moses should have been so intimately acquainted with zoology, with ornithology, and with all the condition and nature of animals, as he shows himself to be in this chapter! It would indeed be a wonder—it would be far more wonderful than to suppose, what is really the common sense view—that Moses did not originate it, but was inspired by the Spirit of God to record it. It requires a great deal of credulity to be an infidel; it requires only a good amount of common sense to believe in Christianity. The distinctions that are drawn here have lasted till now, and are practically acted on. For instance, animals that are called graminivorous and ruminative, and that divide the hoof, are still found to be most wholesome for food. The swine, for instance, which are what Moses would call half clean, not being ruminative and graminivorous, but dividing the hoof; have flesh not so wholesome as the flesh of the sheep and of those animals that have these requisite distinctions. Hence, among the Jews the use of swine's flesh was forbidden; among the Mahometans it is still forbidden; in eastern nations it is disliked. The sceptic thinks that these laws are old and now obsolete institutions, good enough for the Jews, but not for us. But what is the fact? That the Jews, who adhere rigidly to these prescriptions, who act on the precautions that these prescriptions inculcate, and who exercise all the personal, and physical, and social cleanliness—anxious, scrupulous cleanliness—that these prescriptions neces-

sitate, when epidemic or pestilence visits a land, generally escape in greatest proportion; while the same class of Gentiles are struck down, the corresponding class of Jews, it is a remarkable fact, generally escape. Mind you, I believe that in copying the literal observances of the Jews we should do a very wrong thing; what I say is simply this: that they who attend to those habits of thorough cleanliness inculcated here among the lower orders, which the same class of Gentiles do not attend to, and which we, for want of schools to instruct them, do not teach them to do, are generally most healthy. We have in this a very remarkable proof that these regulations and prescriptions are not useless or obsolete, even with regard to the personal comfort and social well-being of mankind.

In the case of fishes the definition is, that whatsoever hath "no fins and scales" is unclean. The eel, therefore, is unclean. And everybody knows that fish of that description is less wholesome. So again with respect to birds—"the eagle, the ossifrage, the ospray, the vulture, the kite, the stork, the owl," and others, are unfit for human food. And the usages of human nature are the most emphatic "amen" to the prescription in the 11th chapter of the Book of Leviticus. There is an indirect evidence that there is a distinction drawn here by One who knew all the fowls of the air, all the fishes of the deep, and all the cattle upon a thousand hills.

It may be remarked, that the beetle, mentioned with the locust, is not fit for human food. But it is evident from a book I have read, that the original word really means a sort of locust, and not the beetle. In the east the locust is one of the choicest delicacies. I

know we shrink from it ; but an Arab would no doubt, in the same manner, shrink from our shrimps or crabs, and think them very horrible. We notice in all this, however, that the great object was not simply to lay down laws of universal obligation ; for I admit at once that this chapter is not obligatory upon us. All I assert is, that the more we approximate to it in the choice of our articles of food, the more wholesome those articles will be found to be ; and, therefore, that while in the letter it is not obligatory, morally and substantially, it seems highly expedient. But the great object of God directing the Jews so minutely, was to insulate them from every other nation. But you ask, Why insulate the Jews ? Because they were a people raised up by God to be a model nation, a specimen of human nature sanctified and taught of God, to be the guardians of the sacred volume—to be witnesses to the unity of the Godhead, and the worship of the one true, and living God ; all flesh having corrupted its way, there was a national election of a peculiar people, to be the guardians of truth amidst the universal darkness. Now, it was important that this people should be distinguished, and kept separate from the rest of the nations of the earth. Let us see how they were kept separate. The first great mode of intercourse in ancient times, as it is now, was the interchange of hospitality. Friends meet friends at table ; so they did then. But the articles which the Gentiles ate, were so different to the articles which the Jew was permitted to eat, that by the very necessity of these laws, the Jew was prevented from mixing with the Gentiles to a very great extent. And as hospitality was then the strongest seal, and stamp, and

mark of confidence, and love, and brotherly aid, it was most important that so fast a tie should not take place between the Jew that worshipped the one God, and the Gentile that bowed down to idols. We see similar effects at the present day. It is difficult to eat with a Mahometan, or rather to get a Mahometan to eat with you ; or to eat with a Hindoo, or rather to get a Hindoo to eat with you. His dietetic maxims may be very false, I admit they are so ; but his dietetic maxims keep him separate from us. And very probably it is the dietetic maxims that prevail in the East that have *stereotyped* Eastern nations, and made the Arab in the desert the same as he has been from the days when Abraham buried Sarah under the oaks of Mamre. It is their peculiar social habits that keep them separate, and that originally made them so. So God designed to keep his people separate, and I do not know a more effective plan than that which is employed in this chapter. We have the historical and actual effect of mingling in rites of hospitality on the moral and religious conduct, in Numbers xxv. 2, 3, "The people did eat, and bowed down to their gods."

Dr. Kitto, in his able edition of the Bible, called "The Pictorial Bible," justifies thus the views which I have here laid down :

"The truth of this observation must be obvious to every person acquainted with the East, where, on account of the natives regarding as unclean many articles of food and modes of preparation in which Europeans indulge, travellers or residents find it impossible to associate intimately with conscientious Mahomedans or Hindoos. Nothing more effectual could be devised to keep one people distinct from another. It

causes the difference between them to be ever present to the mind, touching, as it does, upon so many points of social and every-day contact; and it is therefore far more efficient in its results as a rule of distinction than any difference in doctrine, worship, or morals which men could entertain. While the writer of this note was in Asia, he had almost daily occasion to be convinced of the incalculable efficacy of such distinctions in keeping men apart from strangers. A Mahomedan, for instance, might be kind, liberal, indulgent; but the recurrence of a meal, or any eating, threw him back upon his own distinctive practices and habits, reminding him that you were an unclean person from your habits of indulgence in foods and drinks forbidden to him, and that his own purity was endangered by communication with you. Your own perception of this feeling in him is not to you less painful and discouraging to intercourse, than its existence is to him who entertains it. It is a mutual repulsion continually operating; and its effect may be estimated from the fact, that no nation, in which a distinction of meats was rigidly enforced as part of a religious system, has ever changed its religion. Oriental legislators have been generally aware of the effect of such regulations; and hence through most parts of Asia we find a religious distinction of meats in very active operation, and so arranged as to prevent social intercourse with people of a different faith. In the chapter before us it is not difficult to discover that the Holy Ghost expounded this law. In this vision, it will be recollected, the apostle saw a great white sheet let down to the earth, containing all manner of four-footed beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air, and heard

at the same time a voice commanding him, notwithstanding his scruples, to rise, kill, and eat, for that that which God had cleansed was no longer to be accounted common or unclean. Immediately after this supernatural exhibition, the apostle went, under the direction of the Spirit, to the house of Cornelius, a devout Roman, whom God had chosen into that Christian church of which the visionary sheet was a figure, from its containing not only those meats prohibited by Moses which we usually eat, but also others, of which the flesh of dogs was one. With regard to the Arabs, they were nearly related to the Israelites, and their practices were less corrupt than those of the Egyptians and Canaanites, whence the difference of food is not so strongly marked ; but still it was quite enough to hinder the intimacy of the two nations. The camel not only constitutes the principal wealth of the Arabs, but its flesh is a principal animal food ; besides which they eat the hare, and the *jerboa* : all these are forbidden in this chapter, the last under the name of ‘ mouse.’ If even at this distance of time we can discover such differences between the diet of the Hebrews and that of their neighbours, we may easily conceive that a more intimate acquaintance with the diet of the latter would exhibit more important and numerous distinctions.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

THE rites and ceremonies laid down in this chapter, which is suitable for private rather than public reading, are in no respect obligatory upon us. Its chief value lies in the light it casts upon the Virgin Mary at the birth of our blessed Redeemer. She was so poor as to be unable to offer a lamb in sacrifice. She presented what the poor, on account of their poverty, might offer, two turtle doves, or young pigeons. "When the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male child that openeth the womb, shall be called holy to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons," Luke ii. 22—24.

Woman needs to be reminded that her chief and distinctive suffering is the result of sin, and no less to be taught that a great Sacrifice, formerly in prophecy, now in fact, has been provided, in which there is neither male nor female, but equal welcome and purification of soul for all that flee to Christ for forgiveness.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LEPER. THE TYPICAL DISEASE. THE PRIEST. HIS FUNCTION. MEANING OF SENTENCE. ABSOLUTION. PRAYER BOOK SERVICE FOR SICK.

THERE are, unquestionably, parts of the Bible that are not very instructive to us, especially if read in their strictly literal and historical application, or in their primary reference to the Jews, to whom alone they were emphatically applicable. Perhaps this is one of those chapters that are not interesting or instructive to a miscellaneous congregation, and, like many other parts of this book, it is, perhaps, more peculiarly meant for private and individual study, than for reading on public occasions and in divine service. The reason I have read this chapter is, not merely that it comes in order, and therefore should be read, but, that it contains an account of that chief and special physical disease which is regarded throughout the whole Scripture as the great typical and significant disease; and used, and constantly referred to, both in the history of our Lord and the allusions of the apostles, to set forth, first, the universality of sin; secondly, its contagious character; thirdly, its disruptive power, separating the person from all social life, and insulating him from all the reciprocities and offices of society itself. There was this peculiar feature,

that the man suspected of the infection of leprosy, (a disease supposed to have been imported from Egypt,) was not to apply to the physician, as was the case with other diseases, but to the priest : not that the priest could heal it—for neither the physician nor the priest could heal it ; all that the priest could do, was to say, judging by symptoms and characteristic features that accompanied and marked the disease, “The person has leprosy, or is a leper ;” or, “The person is not a leper ;” or in the language of the chapter, “He shall pronounce him clean, or pronounce him unclean.” You will find that most or all of those expressions that occur in Scripture, descriptive of the soul of man by nature, are borrowed from the disease described in this chapter. For instance, Isaiah says, “The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint ; and from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet there is no soundness at all ;” language evidently allusive to this very disease. In the history of our blessed Lord you remember the interesting instance of the ten lepers, who “came and stood afar off, and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said, Go, show yourselves unto the priest.” You ask, when you read this chapter the first time, “Why should he say so ?” You can only understand the reason of it by being acquainted with the facts in the chapter I have now read. “Go, show yourselves to the priest. And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed.” He said, “Go, and ask the priest whether you be cleansed or uncleansed,” that is, whether the disease be removed, or the disease be there. “Whilst they were going they were cleansed,” that is, they were

healed. Now, as no priest could heal them ; as no earthly physician, or balm in Gilead, or prescription in Israel, could heal the disease, the fact that Jesus healed it as they went to ask the priests if they were healed or not, was evidence that Jesus was more than man, that he was the mighty God, the great High Priest of Israel. And then, "one of them, when he saw that he was cleansed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God"—that was the Saviour. Now, Jesus made them go and show themselves to the priest, in order that the priest, knowing previously that they were lepers, because he had pronounced them unclean, and had them separated from society, might, when he saw them return, ask them, "Ye are now clean ; who has healed you ?" and they would say, "Jesus of Nazareth healed us ;" which must have proved that Jesus of Nazareth was more than man. The leprosy was the great incurable disease that was inflicted, it is supposed, by the finger of God himself, and could only be removed by the Divine command, before which all disease, disorder, and contamination pass away.

In the next place, you will notice here that there were certain characteristic signs on the body, which distinguished and discriminated this peculiar malady from incidental diseases, to which the human frame was liable in every age ; and the priest was the only person who had the prerogative or the power to distinguish or pronounce clean or unclean, as the symptoms might lead him to conclude. The words in the original Hebrew, rendered "pronounce clean or unclean," are very remarkable. They are rendered very properly in our translation, "He shall pronounce him

unclean, or he shall pronounce him clean." But the original Hebrew word is, literally translated, "The priest shall cleanse him, or the priest shall uncleanse him." This is the literal translation of the Hebrew; yet we see plainly that the priest did not cleanse, but merely pronounce, from certain symptoms, that he was clean. He could not uncleanse, because the man was already a leper, and could not be made a leper again. It is plain therefore that the Hebrew idiom or phrase is very properly rendered by our translators, "pronounce clean," and "pronounce unclean." Let us next remember, that the Greek language of the New Testament is not the pure classic Greek of the Attic writers, but a sort of Hebraistic Greek, or tinctured with Hebrew idioms; just as we speak of English, and Scotch, or Irish idioms. Remembering this thought, you will see the meaning of the commission of our blessed Lord which he gave to the apostles:—"Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Our translators render the Greek here literally, while they have translated the corresponding Hebrew figuratively; and if our translators had rendered the passage in John xx. 23, "Whosoever sins ye pronounce to be remitted"—on *data* and evidence given by the party and the sinner—"they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain"—that is, "pronounce to be retained"—from the fruits brought forth by the party, the sinner that is brought before you—"those sins are retained," no perplexity would be possible. If they had translated the words in this way, which is the true rendering, then the interpretation, the monstrous interpretation based upon the

passage by the adherents or advocates of the Romish Church, and those that follow and tread in their wake, would never have been heard of; and the blasphemous notion scarcely have entered man's mind, that a man is to kneel before a priest, to tell him the innermost thoughts of his heart, and to receive from that priest, not declarative, but judicial, absolution pronounced on earth, and, as supposed, ratified infallibly and certainly in heaven! But you say, Then what is meant by "pronounce forgiven," or "pronounce retained?" I answer, We are not infallible, nor do we pretend to be so; but we proclaim to every human being that such and such are the marks and characteristics of a true Christian, and that by these marks you may know whether you be a Christian or not. For what is it to be a Christian? It is to have the pardon of all our sins, and the regeneration of our hearts. So you may pronounce again from other features, and proclaim it as incontrovertible truth, that by the bringing forth of the fruits of injustice, of depravity, of wickedness, you give evidence that your sins are not forgiven, and your heart not renewed. The whole function of the ministry of the gospel is declarative; and the less of the judicial in the pronouncements of one who proclaims the unsearchable riches of Christ, the more scriptural, as well as pleasant, will be the result that will follow.

Here I may mention another fact,—that the so-called absolution, "I absolve thee," is a form of absolution that does not occur in any writer, either in the Eastern or Western churches, for three centuries. There never was heard, for three centuries at least after the birth of Christ, an instance of any one

pronouncing absolution in the first person singular—“*I absolve thee.*” It is always in the third person singular, and is, “*May he be absolved.*” It is never judicial. It is, “*May he be pardoned in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*”—than which nothing can be more proper. But you say, Does not absolution by the first person occur even in a Protestant service? I admit that it does. In the Church of England Prayer-Book, for the visitation of the sick, it does occur. But I am told that that service is not obligatory; that no clergyman is compelled to say it. Explain it as you like, I think it is a great mistake to retain it, if it can be got rid of. The Reformers thought that, by giving a little here and a little there, they would conciliate the greatest number, and do the greatest good. But I am quite sure that if those excellent Reformers had seen the tremendous superstructure that would be built on what they never meant to be the basis of papal superstition, they would, like Knox and the Scottish Reformers, have weeded out the last remains of the apostasy—that might be construed to be so—and so having removed the nests, the rooks, in his own terse language, would never have returned again. However, in that very service, faulty as it is, I may mention there is a very wide difference between it and the popish one. There, it is said to be declarative; in the popish, it is judicial—a wide difference in this respect between the two. Secondly, in that service the party may or may not seek absolution, but in the Romish Church he must seek it once a year, or he is excommunicated. And thirdly, in that service it is only the sick that can come within reach of the

absolution ; but in the Roman Catholic Church it is obligatory upon sick and healthy. And the whole of that service, defective as it is, I admit, and equivocal as it is apparently, proceeds upon the supposition that it is a mere declaration, to satisfy an earnest and scrupulous mind, and not a judicial pronouncement of absolute forgiveness. However, we have it plain in the Word of God, that forgiving and retaining, or remitting and retaining, were not judicial acts, but simply pronouncements, based upon symptoms or upon *data* previously ascertained ; and even the priest that pronounced was not infallible, but might be mistaken.

And lastly, the high priest pronounced according to the rules laid down in God's Holy Word. And the Christian minister, if called upon to speak at all, ought to be guided by that law, that inspired law, which settles all controversies, and terminates all disputes.

How humiliating that man's body should be subject to such diseases ! It was never made to be so. Sin entered, and disease, which is only the commencement of death, by sin. How delightful that blessed hope, that all creation shall one day be pronounced, by the true High Priest, no longer unclean, but clean : all its storms shall be laid, all its injuries removed, all its ills, its aches, and its pains put away ; and the Prince of Peace shall reign over a world at peace with God, and over a family at peace with each other.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISEASE AND SIN. EVERY FACULTY AND AFFECTION INFECTED.
INSULATION OF SIN. PRIEST'S POWER. CHRIST'S DUTIES.

"And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean."

LEVITICUS xiii. 45.

WE have seen in the course of the long and in some degree uninteresting chapter which we have read, what was the nature, the sign, and the disastrous issue of the great typical disease, if it remained unhealed. I also noticed that it is regarded throughout the New Testament economy, and indeed the Old also, as the great typical disease; or that special and peculiar disease incident to the Jews, which was meant to be symbolical and illustrative of the great moral malady of sin, which has overspread and infected all humanity. It is only by reading this chapter, uninteresting as it seems to us, that we can understand many of the peculiar phrases that are employed in the Psalms, and sometimes in the Prophets, and occasionally in the Gospels. This great fact that a disease in the body was typical of a malady in the soul, reminds us at once that there was perfect harmony between the body and the soul, between things spiritual and things temporal, between things heavenly and things earthly. There is

enough of the harmony still surviving to show what and how rich it once was ; there is enough of disturbance introduced to indicate that some great disaster has befallen and overtaken both. In Scripture we shall find disease and sin constantly associated, the one, in some shape or another, connected with the other. Originally the soul was made perfectly pure, without a fault or a flaw, holy and happy ; the body was constituted its shrine, perfectly healthy, free from disease, and all the signs and symptoms of decay ; but sin was first introduced, and disease instantly followed in its track. Sin seems indeed to be the great substance, and disease to be the shadow, the cold and baneful shadow, that everywhere attends it. There is no explanation of the physical distempers that have befallen humanity, except that which is given in God's Holy Word, that sin entered, and death by sin. Death is simply the result of disease—it is not itself disease, but the result, the final result, of the power, the poison, and the venom of disease. And if death was introduced by disease, we naturally and necessarily infer that all ills and aches that humanity is heir to were introduced by sin also.

We find, in the next place, that in the Old Testament economy the cure of bodily disease was almost invariably associated with sacrifice. Wherever a disease was to be removed from the body, or a calamity averted from the land, there we find atoning, expiatory sacrifices were instituted ; and without shedding of blood, not only was there no remission of sins, but also there was no removal of disease. And in the case of our blessed Lord, we find the only successful Physician, who cured all diseases, and restored all that

applied to him, was he who came to live a Priest, to die a Sacrifice, and to present an atoning ransom for the sins as well as for the sorrows of mankind.

The historical statement in this chapter is, that the leprosy overspread the whole body, till it became, in language used by one of the prophets, "white as snow;" the whole physical economy was infected with its deadly poison. And, in that respect, it was the type, and is indeed referred to in the New Testament as the type, of that sin which has infected the whole soul and body of mankind. Take any one faculty that is within us, and we shall find on it the great leprosy, or taint, or moral influence of sin. Man's intellect is still powerful, but it gives evidence of having experienced a shock. The intellect has in it still remaining energies that give token of what it once was; but it has in it also defects, and tremulousness, and weakness, and paralysis, that indicate that it is the subject of some great derangement. The intellect, beyond all question, has shared the consequences of Adam's sin; it is enfeebled, it is perverted, it is often crooked in its conclusions; and, like the rest of the inmates of the human frame, the intellect must put its hand upon its mouth, and its mouth in the dust, and say with the leper of old, "Unclean, unclean."

I need not attempt to prove, that the heart also is defiled. Just as the disease of Israel overspread the whole animal economy, so the moral taint of transgression, account for its introduction as you like, has infected not only the intellect, but the heart. Hence, the prophet says, "The whole head is sick,"—that is, the intellect is infected; "the whole heart is faint,"—that is, the heart is also infected. And the evidence

of this is, that man not only now fails to love God with all the heart, as he was made and meant originally to do, but he loves the creature often more than the Creator, and gives to the workmanship of God's hands the affection, the esteem, the estimation that are the exclusive prerogatives and just demands of God himself. The gold is literally become dim, and the fine gold is literally changed ; the heart has lost its upward tendency ; our first love is not to God-ward, our strongest affection is away from him. We constantly feel the things of this world intruding, and demanding and obtaining supremacy ; constantly striving for a share, a larger share than is due, of that love and affection that we owe to God. Our blessed Lord gives the heart its true and fearful character, when he says, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adultery, and such like ; and these are the things that defile a man." Truly, therefore, and justly did the Psalmist pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God ; renew a right spirit within me."

But not only are the heart and intellect affected, as I have shown you, but the conscience also has suffered, and is poisoned by the universal disease. The conscience is that power in every one of us which we feel better than we can define ; that power within us which tells us, even weakened and crippled as it is, "This is wrong, and that is right ;" and which adds to its judgment also those feelings which follow the conscious perpetration of the wrong, and that approbation that follows the conscious performance of what is right, and good, and true. That mysterious faculty or power was once the vicegerent of God in the human bosom ; it was once the oracle by which he spake ;

and Adam, before he fell, had not to read God's will on the sky, or on the earth, or in a book, but he had to listen only to the promptings of the holy monitor within, to know what was the will and the mind of the Holy Creator and Governor without. But the moment that sin entered, this mysterious power, this faculty that so distinguishes us from the lower creation, became powerfully diseased. It now magnifies immaterial and unimportant things, and it frequently disregards solemn truths, and is a seared, or a dead, or an insensible conscience. It is sometimes overflowed by guilty passions, it is sometimes silent when it ought to rebuke them ; sometimes quiescent when it ought to assert its original authority, and sometimes the democracy of the passions rises in fierce array, dethrones the monarch that ought to sway and govern them, and prompts man to pursue the infatuated course that leads to his ruin. And in the worst of cases this power of conscience is often perverted to the wrong side, sanctioning the sins which it ought to abhor, and siding with, or conniving at, acts which God has condemned, and which it knows in its purest and best moments to be contrary to his holy law. When the intellect that discerns, the heart that loves or hates, and the conscience that testifies what is right or wrong, are thus infected, truly may we say with Isaiah, "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint, and from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness at all." "The heart of man," says Jeremiah, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" That word translated in Jeremiah xvii. 9, "Desperately wicked," is literally, "so depraved as to be incurable by human

power." "The heart of man is deceitful above all things," and so diseased as to be incurable by human power.

Were the tokens and the evidences of the assertion I have made not so obvious and so numerous as they actually are, you find other proofs in the miser fixing his heart upon gold, in spite of the decisions of intellect, the better impulses of the heart, and the rebukes of conscience. You find the drunkard still indulging in his cups, notwithstanding a thousand testimonies within and without, that he is ruining soul and body. You find the Pharisee robbing widows' houses, and making long prayers for a pretence. You find the very religion of love and truth corrupted into the religion of superstition, of hate, and a lie. So depraved and fallen is man, that it looks that, if he had the power, he would turn redemption itself into a nullity, or into a curse. There is, then, on all sides the evidence of some great derangement. We never can suppose we were made so. Disease seems to us natural, but it is most unnatural; error, sin, hate, all seem to us normal and ordinary, but they are really altogether the reverse. We were made holy, happy, pure, immortal; and if we have become otherwise, though I cannot explain the reason of it, it is not God that is to blame, but man that has sinned, and brought death by sin into the world, and all our woe.

We may well ask with Job, at the conclusion of these remarks, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" And we must answer with him, "Not one." "Woe is me," said Isaiah, "for I am a man of unclean lips." Abraham said he was but dust and ashes. Job was constrained to say, when he saw him-

self, "I abhor myself." Peter said, "Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Paul said, "I am the chiefest of sinners;" and thus we find that the best of men are they that to themselves and to God acknowledge themselves to be the worst. The man who is least Christian will think himself the most enlightened and the best; and he who has most of the light of truth in his intellect, irradiating his conscience, sees himself to be the worst and the chiefest of sinners.

We find, on tracing the similitude between the disease which is here mentioned, that the leper had to be insulated from the rest of the world, and left by himself to get rid of the disease that thus separated him. So the sinner, in God's moral government, must be for ever separated from the communion and company of the holy, if he continue the subject of this great moral malady—sin. Even society itself is obliged to shut up in prison the violator of its rights, the source and author of its disorganization. And in God's moral government much more must He separate, from the fellowship of the good in heaven, them that are not only depraved themselves, but must, by the necessity of their state, infect, deprave, and corrupt others. Hence the abode of the lost is not a place so much prepared by God, as a place into which the sinner necessarily precipitates himself. It is the very nature of his being to be detached from, and to fall further from the company and communion of, the holy and the happy. Just as a stone falls towards the centre of the earth, a sinner falls downwards to ruin. It is his nature, it is his natural course; not his original nature, but the nature that he now has: infected

by sin, and aggravated by sinful courses, he naturally and necessarily gravitates downwards and downwards, farther and farther from God. And therefore the sinner, unless healed in some way, like the leper of old, must be separated or set apart from the fellowship of the holy and the happy for ever.

The leper's disease was so bad, that it was incurable by human means. No human power could cure it; neither physician nor priest could cure it. It is so with sin. All the waters of Damascus, or Abana and Pharpar, its rivers, cannot wash away sin. There is no balm in Gilead that can cure it; there is no physician there able to remove it; and human nature, left to itself, would remain the victim and the subject of this deadly disease for ever and for ever; and while human nature seeks out many physicians, it discovers, like the woman of the Gospel, that instead of becoming better, it is made worse, with the additional disadvantage, that strength and money are spent in seeking what it is unsuccessful in finding.

Like the leprosy, in the next place, sin is contagious. The characteristic disease of the Israelite spread from person to person, from house to house, and throughout the whole land. And who needs to be taught that "evil communications corrupt good manners?" Who needs to learn that there is in an evil word, in a crooked course, a contagious influence that is distilled upon susceptible and sensitive and living hearts? I believe every look on the face, every word from the lips, every act in the life, has influence; and when these are depraved, the influence is evil; just as in the opposite direction, when they are good, the influence is beneficent and good also. And not only

was this typical disease thus infectious, but it also infected houses, garments, robes—everything that the individual touched. Is not that the case with sin? It has infected the whole earth. There is not a flower that blooms so beautifully as it once did; there is not a precious gem, or jewel, or mineral so pure as it once was. There is nothing on earth that the stain and the taint of sin is not on; there is nothing with which we come into contact that is not injured, weakened, deteriorated, by the touch and the communion of man. And hence, says the apostle so justly, in consequence of the infection of the inhabitant, the whole house is in sorrow—"the whole creation groaneth and travailleth in pain until now, waiting for the redemption—that is, the manifestation of the sons of God." The moment that the monarch fell, his sceptre, his crown, and his palace were shorn of their glory, and infected by his sin. The inhabitant has become sick, and the whole house shares in his malady. The soul, the conscience, the heart, the body, all we are, have shared in the taint of Adam's first sin, and all that we touch has caught its contagion too.

In the ancient economy, the party to whom the leper presented himself, was not the physician, as in other diseases, but the priest. And this shows that it was a disease in some shape intimately associated with man's guilt, or with sin. A Jew of old, like a Gentile now, if taken ill, applied to the physician; but when infected with this great typical disease, he did not go to the physician, but to the priest. But, more than this, even the priest could not heal him; the priest had no prescription that could heal him, no balm that could remove it. All that he could do was

to say, "You are healed," or "You are not healed," or, "You are advancing towards convalescence," or the reverse. The priest was to pronounce him clean, or to pronounce him unclean. But how much better is the economy under which we live! Our High Priest can not only pronounce us clean, but make us clean; he can not only say, that we are justified, but he can justify us by his perfect righteousness, forgive us by his atoning blood, by his sanctifying Spirit, through his inspired word. He can not only say, "You are clean," but "Be ye clean;" and we may say to him, what a leper could not say to the priest of old, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The leper in the Gospel said so to Jesus. Jesus made him clean. If Jesus had been mere man he would have sanctioned blasphemy, in listening to a leper saying to him, what he could not say to the greatest or the most gifted of his nation, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." The high priest could not, the priest could not, Moses could not, Aaron could not; God alone cleansed the leper. Jesus was God; therefore he accepted the attribute ascribed to him; and he said, as God alone could say, "I will; be thou clean." Now, in our application to our High Priest for the removal of this malady, we have, like the leper in the Gospel, to ask him to make us clean. What he requires of us is, that we should feel, or if we do not feel, that we should conclude, from the express assertion of the Bible, that we are morally diseased; that the incurable malady of sin is upon us; and that we should go to Him and say, "Unclean, unclean;" "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." We are welcome

to do so. The priest of old dared not reject the leper that applied for his judgment ; the High Priest in heaven will not reject a sinner that applies for his cure. On the contrary, he says, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." He offers you perfect cure ; he exacts from you, as the only return, the glory and the praise of having done it. Our High Priest, in the next place, is as accessible to us as ever was the priest to the ancient Israelite. He is more so : the Jew had to go up to his temple—to Mount Zion, or to Gerizim, or to Jerusalem ; but we find our Priest in all places—present at all times. The sigh, the petition, the desire of the heart rise to him. He bends his ear, and listens to the meanest patient's prayer. He walks amid the wards of this great hospital of ours ; he knows the case of every patient that is there ; and not one who applies to him for compassion, for a cure, for a new heart, will ever appeal in vain. If there be truth in the Bible, this is truth.

If we are not perfectly healed, are we in the process of being so ? If we cannot say—and I am sure we cannot say—that this malady is removed from our heart, darkness from the intellect, perversity from the conscience—if we cannot say that, can we say, at least, we are patients of the Great Physician ? Can we, at least, say this, "We have submitted our case to him ; we have put ourselves in his hands ?" You are not called upon to say, "I am cured, holy, pure, pardoned, regenerated," though that you may hereafter add—but you are responsible for refusing to be

patients, seeing that, if never patients of the Great Physician, you never can be inmates of the everlasting rest and home that remains for the people of God.

And if any of you have derived benefit from this Great Physician ; if you have gone to him unclean, and are now cleansed ; if you have gone to him guilty, and sought and now found pardon ; if you have gone to him depressed and downcast, and found from him peace ; if his Word has cheered you, if the preaching of his Gospel has encouraged you, if his promises have comforted you, if his consolations have refreshed you, if he has placed in your hearts the indomitable and inextinguishable hopes of glory, through his precious blood and his glorious sacrifice, and made you love what once you hated, and hate what once you loved, the least you can do is to praise the Great Physician, and bid other sufferers come and share in the remedy provided.

CHAPTER XIV.

CEREMONIES ON RECOVERY OF THE LEPER. PRIEST'S OFFICE.
ABSOLUTION. THE TWO BIRDS. LEPROSY IN A HOUSE. PRAYER
AND PAINS-TAKING. THE BLESSING FROM GOD AND MEANS BY
MAN.

IN the previous chapter, which we read last Lord's day morning, we had the description of the characteristic signs of that disease, called, very justly, the great typical disease, supposed to be the special infliction of the hand of God, and to be cured or to be put away, not by the prescriptions of the physician, nor even by the prayers of the priest, but only by the immediate power and presence of God himself. We find in this chapter the description of those ceremonial acts which were to accompany, or rather to follow, the cleansing of the leper from this great disease—the type and symbol of sin—by which he had been afflicted. First of all, "he shall be brought unto the priest; and the priest shall go forth out of the camp," and see him; and then the priest, when he finds that he is clean, shall pronounce him clean. I explained to you, in my remarks upon the previous chapter, that "pronounce clean," and "pronounce unclean," are the true meaning, though not the verbal translation, of the Hebrew. The Hebrew is literally, "The priest shall cleanse him," and "the priest shall

uncleanse him ;" but you can see, from the fact that it was after the leper was healed that the priest cleansed him or pronounced him clean, and therefore that this is the true meaning of the words. And I showed you that the words, " Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted ; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained," are borrowed from this rite, and simply declarative, not judicial ; and as the priest of old pronounced upon an individual whether he was a leper or not by the signs of the disease, as those signs were delineated in the only rule of faith—the Bible—so the minister of the Gospel now must pronounce an opinion, if he is called upon to pronounce at all, " Your sins are forgiven, or not, according to the fruits that you bring forth, the repentance that you show, the faith that you exercise ;" and these are the signs and *criteria* laid down, not in traditions, not in counsels, but in the infallible and only record—God's Holy Word and Law.

Next we read that the priest was to take "two birds alive and clean, and cedar-wood, and scarlet, and hyssop : and the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water." Now it seems absurd to speak of an earthen vessel, and water in it called running water." But all the absurdity is taken away, when we recollect that the original is " living water." It is the same expression that occurs in other parts of Scripture, " I will give unto him living water"—" it shall be in him a well of living water." And the real meaning of this passage is, " fresh water " from the fountain, and not stagnant, and unfit for physical, or for spiritual, or for ecclesiastical purposes. Then it has been supposed

that the one bird that was slain was meant to describe the death of Christ; and the dismissal of the other bird, after being dipped in the blood of the slain bird, was meant to be a type and prefiguration of the resurrection. It is nowhere in Scripture said to be so, but it is obviously typical of sacrifice; and no one sacrifice, no one symbol, could set forth the completeness of the work of Christ; and therefore many symbols may have been employed and combined to set forth that great and blessed act.

We read, then, that the person, after this, was still to present an offering of "two he-lambs, without blemish;" and to remain at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation till the priest had offered these; and by this he was to have access to the congregation.

We read that the priest was to sprinkle him *seven times*; that is, completely, the number meant to denote perfection. He was also to touch the tip of his right ear, to denote that that ear should be opened only to all that was pure. He was also to touch the thumb of the right hand, to teach that every act was to be consistent with his character. And upon the right foot, to show that he was to walk in God's ways, which are ways of pleasantness and of peace. So that the man should feel—what is stated by the apostle in Romans xii.—that he was to present himself, soul and body, a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Now the language employed here—the hyssop, and the cedar-wood, and the sprinkling—casts light upon many passages in the Psalms, and those passages, again, cast light upon the phraseology of the New Testament." "Ye are come unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." We read again, in

another passage, of “the sprinkling of his blood,” the “blood of sprinkling.” The meaning of that is, just as the life of the turtle-dove, the lamb, or the bird, was sacrificed by the shedding of its blood, and typically and ecclesiastically, or Levitically, virtue or qualification was imparted to the person related to it; so the efficacy of Christ’s death, represented by his blood—that is, the atoning efficacy of it—is to be applied so to our hearts and consciences that we may have peace with God, free pardon of our sins, and the hopes of an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Having seen then, first of all, that the cleansing of the leper was to be associated with the priest, not with the physician; secondly, that its removal was to be accompanied with sacrifice, or the offering of atoning and expiatory victims; we learn from these two facts alone, that that disease was not one of the natural offspring of the Fall, so much as the special and significant infliction of God; and meant to lead that people to learn the existence of a greater malady that has overspread the soul, and to look forward to the only remedy for that malady—the Atonement which should be made in the fulness of the times.

At the close of the chapter, you have the leprosy in the house; and that is spoken of as God’s infliction entirely—“When I put the plague of leprosy in a house.” Now, notice what the priest was to do. When plague, or pestilence, or war, or famine, come on a land, there are two classes of persons who act in opposite ways. One class will pray only that God may remove them, and do nothing more; another class will set about sanitary reform—a most precious and im-

portant thing—but they will do nothing more. Now, we are taught in this chapter, that the two are to be combined. The priest not only applied to God, and offered sacrifices that the plague might be removed from the house, but he set to work and pulled down the stones, and broke the timbers, and scraped the house, and had it plastered and cleansed ; and thus there was the most effective sanitary process, accompanied with the most sacred and Christian appeal to Him who is the Lord and the Giver of life ; and who alone healeth, and when he healeth none can make ill. Now, it is the happy combination of these that constitutes in all things the perfection of Christian conduct. If we so think of means as to think of nothing else, we shall have no blessing ; if we so think of, or engage in prayer, as to exclude means, we shall have no blessing. If we suppose that by attending to all that is just, and proper, and obligatory in sanitary measures, we may defy God, we blaspheme ; but on the other hand, if we act as some, pray, and appoint days of fasting and of prayer, but do nothing to lift the poor from their degradation, to improve their dwellings, to increase their comforts, to give raiment to the naked, food to the hungry, a shelter and a home to them that have none, then that is downright hypocrisy. But if we can combine the two, by using all the means that God, in his providence, has given us, as vigorously as if all depended upon the means, and yet, while we do so, look up to God as if the means were worthless, and he must do all, then we shall combine the blessed heavenly benediction with the use of the most effective earthly means, and God, our own God, shall crown us with his blessing. Bush makes some excellent remarks here :

"REMARKS.—(ver. 2, 3.) 'He shall be brought unto the priest; and the priest shall go forth out of the camp,' &c. The ministers of righteousness are to be always ready to *meet* the returning penitent, who would fain be cleansed from the defilement of sin, or who hopes he has been, and welcome him back to the fold of Christ.

"(4.) 'Then shall the priest command to take for him,' &c. A very remarkable difference marks the vast superiority of *our* Great High Priest over the high priests of the Jews. The latter, being a mere man, and himself compassed with infirmity, could not *heal* the leper; he could only *discover* by inspection when he was already healed by God, and then by his office *declare* this to the people. He was then to perform the ceremonies appointed for his cleansing, and thus restore him again to society and to the privileges of God's house. But the Lord Jesus *heals* the leper. 'Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean; and Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, and said, I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.' To this great Physician, then, let us resort, to obtain that moral cleansing for which there is neither cure nor relief in any other quarter. Let us cry to him as did the leper, in the day of his flesh, 'Jesus, master, have mercy on us!' and God himself shall acknowledge and pronounce us clean. The hyssop is even now ready wherewith to sprinkle our souls. Let us use it by faith, and we shall experience with David its unfailing efficacy; 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' But let us be sprinkled not once or twice only, but '*seven* times,'

then shall we be ‘washed *thoroughly* from our iniquity, and be cleansed from our sin.’

“(9.) The leper did not come at once into the camp, after he had been pronounced clean, and sprinkled according to the ordinance. He was not admitted to his tent, or restored to society, till after living in some place alone for seven days more; and then after again washing his body and his clothes, and shaving off all his hair, even to his eye-brows, he was reinstated in all his former privileges and comforts. This was designed to remind us, that the infection of nature, the defiling effects of sin, still remain, even in those who are regenerate, and force upon us the necessity of a daily washing in Christ, in order to our perfect cleansing. It is only in heaven that we can be pronounced fully delivered from our remaining corruptions. But there is, as it were, the short period of a single week before that event arrives, when we shall be introduced to our Father’s house, to our eternal home. The intervening time must indeed be spent in humiliating and painful exercises, but those exercises are only preparing us for the richer enjoyment of the promised bliss.

“(14.) The application of the blood and oil to the ear, the thumb, and the toe of the leper, seems to intimate that every member of the body, and every faculty of the soul, needs a *special* purification from guilt and corruption, and a *special* consecration in the renewed man to the service of God. The language of the solemn rite was virtually this: ‘Now you are made clean, let all your faculties and powers be devoted to the service of God. Let your ears be open to the commands of God. Let the work of your hands be bestowed upon the business of your high calling, and the accomplishment

of the divine will. Let your footsteps be ordered in his word.'

"(15.) Neither the blood nor the oil was on any account to be omitted in the purification of the leper; nor can either of them be omitted in the restoration of our souls to God. The oil significantly shadowed forth the Holy Ghost as a Spirit of sanctification. By the blood we are justified, and by the oil we are sanctified. And it is worthy of remark, that the order to the leper was, that the oil should be put *upon* the blood of the trespass-offering, hinting that the blood of Christ must *first* be applied for our justification, and that *then* the Spirit will be given for our sanctification."

CHAPTER XV.

[EVERY chapter of the Bible has its use—its place—and its proper subjects.

This chapter is not suitable for congregational or family reading.

“Create in us clean hearts, O Lord; and renew right spirits within us.”]



Lecticus xvi.]

THE ARK WITHIN THE VAIL.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT. ITS EXTENT. THE LONELY INTERCESSOR. THE ONLY SACRIFICE. THE PERFECT SPRINKLING. HIGH PRIEST OFFERS FOR HIMSELF. TWO GOATS. INTERPRETATIONS.

THE following remarks form a very just *r  sum  * of the contents of this interesting chapter :—

“ The proper place of this chapter, as appears from v. 1, would have been immediately after the tenth ; but the death of Aaron’s two sons, for their profane conduct in the discharge of their office as priests, gave occasion to the enactment of the above-cited laws respecting the various uncleannesses which dis-qualified an Israelite for approaching the sanctuary. Those ordinances having been despatched in the five preceding chapters, the regul  r thread of the sacred record is now resumed, and Moses goes on to give directions concerning the great national festival of atonement in its various details.

“ This is called by the sacred writer ים הַכְפָּרוּם *yom hakkippurim*, day of expiations or atonements, and by the modern Jews כְּפֻרָה *kippur*. It was so called from its having been instituted for the expiation of all the sins, irreverences, and pollutions of all the Israelites, from the highest priest to the lowest people, com-

mitted by them throughout the year. It was observed on the tenth day of the seventh month, or Tisri, corresponding to a part of our September. It was one of the most important and interesting days in the whole Jewish calendar; and though called occasionally the ‘feast of expiation,’ yet its genuine character was rather that of a fast—a day for ‘afflicting their souls,’—and is only called ‘feast’ in the sense of a *set solemnity*. It is the day alluded to, Acts 27. 9:—Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because *the fast was now already past*, Paul admonished them,’ &c. It was in all its services and ceremonies the fullest representation, the most perfect shadow, of the great work of redemption; the high priest prefiguring, in all he did, that which Christ, in the fulness of times, was ordained to do. On this account a somewhat minute notice of the observances of the day may be proper in this connexion.

“ Of so much sacredness was this solemnity regarded, that the people began their preparation for it seven days before, by removing the high priest from his own house to a chamber in the temple, (after the temple was built,) lest he should contract such a pollution from any of his family, as might incur a seven days’ uncleanness, and thereby unfit him for performing his pontifical duties. On the third and seventh of these days, he was besprinkled with the ashes of the red heifer, lest he might inadvertently have been defiled by a dead body. On the morning of the day before that of the atonement, they brought him to the east gate of the court of the Gentiles, where they made bullocks, and rams, and lambs to pass

before him, that he might be the better able to make the proper selection; and on every day of the seven they caused him to sprinkle the blood of the daily sacrifice, to burn the parts of it upon the altar, to offer the incense, and to trim the lamps, that he might be the more familiar with these offices, when called to perform them. He was moreover committed, for a part of each of the days, to some of the elders of the Sanhedrim, who read to him the rites of the day in order to make sure of his going rightly through the rubric. He was then conducted into the chamber of incense, that he might learn to handle the incense, and to take an oath as to the mode of burning it when he entered into the holiest of all. Their words on the occasion were as follows:—‘High priest, we are the messengers of the Sanhedrim, and thou art our messenger, and that of the Sanhedrim; we adjure thee by Him that caused his name to dwell in this house, that thou alter not anything of what we have spoken unto thee.’ The reason of this solemn adjuration was, that a Sadducee, in contempt of the written word, and of their traditions, at one time had dared to kindle the incense without the vail, and to carry it smoking within; whereas he ought not to have kindled it till within the vail. During the night that preceded the grand solemnity, he was required to eat but sparingly, though he was to fast the whole of the next day, for fear that he might become drowsy, and thus desecrate in some measure the services of the day. This entire night was spent in his expounding, or hearing expounded to him, the written law.

“The day having at length arrived, the high priest laid aside his ordinary dress, bathed himself the first

time, and put on the rich garments peculiar to his office. Habited with these, he instantly went into the court of the priests, went to the laver according to priestly usage, to wash his hands and his feet for the first time; proceeded thence to the north side of the altar, to kill the morning sacrifice; ascended the altar with the several pieces, and laid them on the fire; went into the holy place to trim the lamp and offer the incense; blessed the people on the top of the steps of the porch; and in short did all that belonged to the ordinary morning service.

"Having finished this part of his duty, the next thing was to solemnize his own mind and the people's by some previous sacrifices. These, in Num. 29. 8—11, are said to be as follows: a bullock, a ram, and seven lambs for a burnt-offering, with their appropriate meal-offerings; and a kid of the goats for a sin-offering. When he had finished these, he washed his hands and feet a second time at the laver. He then retired to a particular chamber of the temple, and proceeded to strip himself of his rich habiliments, to bathe himself in water a second time, and to put on his plain white linen vestments, the same dress as that worn by the common priests, except that he had the sacerdotal mitre on his head. Thus attired, he proceeded to the work of sacrifice. Going up to the bullock, and standing with his face towards the temple, he laid both his hands on the head of the animal, and solemnly pronounced the following words: 'O Lord, I have sinned, done perversely, and transgressed before thee, I and my house. I beseech thee, O Lord, expiate the sins, perversities, and transgressions whereby I have sinned, done perversely, and

transgressed, I and my house, as it is written in the law of Moses, thy servant, saying, For in this day he will expiate for you, to purge you from all your sins before the Lord, that ye may be clean ;' referring to v. 30, where these words are to be found.

" Having made this confession, he went to the north-east corner of the court, where the two kids of the goats, intended for the congregation, were ordained to stand. There he cast lots for the two goats, by means of two pieces of gold, put into a box called *אֶת kelpi*, on one of which was written *לְהָבוֹה laihovah*, for the *Lord*, and on the other *לְאַזָּזֵל le-azazel*, for *Azazel*, rendered in our version, 'for the scape-goat,' in relation to which an extended discussion will be found in the ensuing notes. He then proceeded to slay the bullock for his own sins, and the goat upon which the lot had fallen to be sacrificed to the Lord; after which he filled a censer with burning coals from the altar, and putting two handfuls of incense into a vase, he bore them into the holy of holies. Having here poured the incense upon the coals, he returned, took the blood of the bullock and the goat, and went again into the most holy place. With his finger he first sprinkled the blood of the bullock, and afterwards of the goat, upon the lid of the ark of the covenant, and seven times also he sprinkled it upon the floor before the ark. He then returned from the most holy into the holy place, and besmeared the horns of the golden altar with the blood of the bullock and the goat, and jetted the blood seven times over the surface of the altar.

" The next duty of the high priest was to make an atonement for the holy place, for the tabernacle, and

for the altar. This was done by sprinkling the blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat, each right before the vail, and then by mingling them together, and sprinkling the horns and the body of the golden altar of incense.

" We are now come, in the order of the ceremonies, to the scape-goat, which was to be sent away into the wilderness. To this animal, as he stood in the court of the priests, the high priest approached, and laying both hands upon its head, which was bound around with a scarlet thread, made over it a solemn confession of the sins of the people of Israel, after which it was consigned to the hands of a person especially appointed to conduct it to some desert and desolate region, where it was allowed an unmolested escape. The mystical or typical design of this transaction will be found fully considered in a subsequent note. The Jewish writers detail a multitude of additional ceremonies connected with the dismission of the scape-goat, but as they are obviously of a fabulous cast, we waive entirely the recital of them.

" After the sending away of the emissary-goat, the high priest put off his white vestments, and assuming his splendid robes, sacrificed a holocaust for himself and the people, and then offered another sin-offering. The Jews assert that he then went a *third* time into the holy of holies for the purpose of bringing away the censer; but this is not certain, as he might have taken it when he returned the second time for the blood. However this may be, he proceeded afterwards to wash his hands and feet at the laver, after which he went to the dressing-chamber, that he might lay aside his linen suit, bathe himself for the last time, and re-

sume his rich official dress, in which to offer the evening incense and trim the lamps on the golden candle-stick. All this done, he washed his hands and feet at the laver for the last time ; and went to the dressing-chamber ; laid aside his rich attire ; resumed his ordinary wearing apparel ; and retired to his own house, accompanied by the multitude, rejoicing that God had not mingled his blood with his sacrifice."

This chapter describes the most solemn and impressive ceremonial in all the ritual of Levi—namely, the transactions on the great day of Atonement, celebrated in the month of September, once a year. It seems to have been a sort of recapitulation or condensation of all the sacrifices of previous months, and to be an atoning, or purifying of the temple, the altar, the priests, the people, and of all the sacrifices connected therewith.

The high priest was first of all to make sacrifice without in his usual robes ; but when he went into the holy place beyond the vail, which was the type of heaven, that Christ has now entered for us, he put on the simple linen robes of the ordinary priest ; as if to show how utterly unworthy he was to appear before Him whose eye is purer than to behold transgression. When he went there he was *alone*. No priest, or king, or member of the Church of Israel must be with him. This was fulfilled when Christ entered into heaven, the true holy place, alone making intercession for us. And as no priest might go with the high priest into the typical holy of holies to help him to intercede for the people, so no saint or angel can now take part in Christ's intercession in the true holy of holies. He liveth alone to make intercession for the people.

And secondly, on this day the high priest alone made the atonement, presented the sacrifice, and was the conspicuous and acting official in its great and solemn transactions. So Jesus, when he made an atonement for the sins of all that believe, did it alone. No one shared in his sorrows ; none must therefore share in his glory. Of the people there was none with him ; he trod the wine-press alone ; and when the virgin mother offered her aid by giving her counsel, he meekly but firmly repelled her—“ Woman, what have I to do with thee ? ” “ I must tread the wine-press alone. This is the great day of atonement for a world ; and not even a mother’s tears must mingle with the atoning blood of the Incarnate and suffering Son.”

You will notice, in the next place, that the priest had to sprinkle the sacrificial blood with his finger seven times. The number seven simply denotes in the Word of God perfection. The seven Spirits, the one Holy Spirit ; the seven Churches, the one Catholic Church ; the seven times—that is, perfectly, completely. You will notice, in the next place, that the high priest here had to make an atonement first for himself, then for his household, then for all the congregation of Israel. Here the type fails to embody and set forth the antitype ; because Christ needed not to offer first for himself, and then for the people, in that he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. But the high priest was a sinner ; as a sinner he needed an atonement for himself ; an imperfect type setting forth a perfect and a spotless Saviour.

The most interesting feature, perhaps, in the chapter I have read, is the type or symbol of the two goats. There have been disputes about the just interpreta-

tion of this. I may state that Faber, a very acute and able critic upon Leviticus, thinks that the one goat was sacrificed for sin—representing Christ's death; that the scape-goat was dedicated to the evil spirit—representing Christ put into the power of Satan to be tempted in the wilderness. The reason that he thinks so is, that the word for goat of “scape” is azazel; and that name was applied to the fallen spirit by the Jews. And, therefore, Faber thinks it was one goat for a sacrifice—to denote Christ's atonement; the other goat let loose to Satan, or sent away to Satan—to represent the Saviour given up into the hands of the wicked one to be tempted for a season.

The second interpretation is by Bush, the American commentator, a man of great sagacity and talent, and he thinks that the one goat that was slain as a sacrifice, represented Christ's atonement for us; but that the other goat represented the Jewish races let loose, bearing the fearful responsibility of having trodden under foot the precious blood of Christ, and crucified the Son of God, and stained their name and their nation with the infamy of that crime: and that they, a blasted race, driven into the desert, were represented by the scape-goat that was here let go. And he thinks on the same ground, that when the lots were cast, and Jesus was condemned, and Barabbas was let go, that that was the carrying out of the same great symbol—Barabbas, the representative of the Jews, let go; but branded with an inexpiable crime; and Jesus, the Great Atonement, sacrificed for the sins of all that believe. These criticisms, however, are more plausible than true. I do think the old-fashioned interpretation is the just one, and there is no valid reason for super-

seding it ; that the one goat sacrificed on the altar, was the symbol of Christ our Saviour or Atonement sacrificed for us ; and that the other goat let loose into the desert, was the symbol and representation to the children of Israel of Jesus rising from the dead, bearing the sins that he had exhausted, entering into heaven, and there ever living to make intercession for us. I know there are difficulties even in accepting the last of these ; but those difficulties, if they do not completely vanish, are much diluted when you notice the accompaniments or the rites by which this goat was let loose into the wilderness : that the priest was to lay his hands upon the head of the scape-goat—the one that was presented alive—over it he was to confess all the sins of the children of Israel ; and then this scape-goat was let loose, with the sins of Israel upon its head. Now, the very phraseology that is applied to the scape-goat, is applied to Jesus. “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away”—that carrieth away—“the sins of the world.” And I cannot conceive a more beautiful type of Christ our Saviour, or a more expressive exhibition of the mode in which we become interested in him than that of the high priest laying his hand upon its head, transferring the sins of Israel to it, dismissing it, and the sins blotted out, no more remembered, carried into a desert, passed away from the reminiscences of Israel and of God for ever.

So the believer lays not his literal hand, but the trust of his soul, not on a literal head, but on Christ, his atonement and his sacrifice ; and his sins are put away, and he enters into the blessedness of that man whose sins are forgiven, whose iniquities are blotted out, and to whom the Lord imputeth no transgression.

CHAPTER XVII.

No sacrifices were to be offered save in the appointed place.

No sacrifices were to be offered to heathen gods.

The blood, or the life of the animal, the type of the blood of Jesus, was not to be eaten. It was a lesson, not food.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THIS chapter derives its importance from discussion on the lawfulness of marrying a deceased wife's sister. I add Bush's judicious remarks :—

"As the chosen and covenant tribes of Israel were soon to take up their journey to the land of Canaan, the inhabitants of which were to be exterminated for their multifarious iniquities in the sight of God, a recital is here made of some of those aggravated forms of wickedness which were rife among them, and which God had determined signally to punish. This is done not only to illustrate the justice of the divine proceedings in their excision, but also with a view to put the peculiar people themselves on their guard against yielding to the contagion of their pernicious example, and thus becoming obnoxious to the same fearful retributions which were now about to be visited upon the Canaanites. The particular class of abominations more especially pointed out in this chapter, and to which the brand-mark of the divine reprobation is so conspicuously affixed, is that of *incestuous connexions*. Not only had that abandoned race been guilty of a total apostasy from the worship of the true God, substituting in his room the sun and moon and host of heaven, and bowing down to stocks and stones and creeping things, but they had mingled

with their idolatry every vice that could degrade human nature and pollute society. In the black catalogue of these, the abominations of lust stand pre-eminent; and whether in the form of adultery, fornication, incest, sodomy, or bestiality, they had now risen to a pitch of enormity which the forbearance of Heaven could tolerate no longer, and of which a shuddering dread was to be begotten in the minds of the people of the covenant. And in order that no possible plea of ignorance or uncertainty might be left in their minds as to those connexions which were lawful and those which were forbidden, the Most High proceeds in the present and in the 20th chapter to lay down a number of specific prohibitions on this subject, so framed, as not only to include the extra-nuptial pollutions, which had prevailed among the heathen, but also all those incestuous unions which were inconsistent with the purity and sanctity of the marriage relation. Both classes of crimes we think are in fact included; so that it is doing no violence to the spirit of the text to regard it as containing a system of marriage-laws by which the peculiar people were ever after to be governed.

"As this is the only passage in the compass of the whole Bible where any formal enactments are given on this subject, this and the connected chapters treating of this theme have always been deemed of peculiar importance in their relations to the question of the lawful degrees, within which the marriage connexion may now be formed by those who make the law of God the great standard of moral duty. But it is more especially with reference to the lawfulness of marriage with a *deceased wife's sister* that the bearings

of this chapter become important to us under the gospel, and at the present time; as it is well known that the occurrence of cases of that kind has often greatly agitated the religious communions to which the parties belonged, and even at the present day, the difficulty of effecting an entire unanimity of sentiment among Christians appears as great as ever. We can scarcely expect, indeed, within the limits which the nature of the present work will allow, to bring the matter to a decisive issue, even if we were entirely confident on which side the truth lay, which we are forced to acknowledge we are not. The just decision of the question necessarily involves the establishment of several great preliminary principles of interpretation, besides a display of the idiomatic usages of the Hebrew philologically exhibited, which cannot well be made satisfactory in a small compass. But as the subject is one on which the truth is perhaps to be reached only by the gradual accumulation of evidence, we venture with others to contribute our small quota of suggestion towards the solution of a very important point, not of criticism only, but also of casuistry.

“It will probably be seen that our leanings are to the side of the *unlawfulness* of the connexion; but recent discussions have brought forth so strong an array of arguments in support of the opposite theory, that it seems, on the whole, no more than is due to the presentation of evidence on both sides, that we should at present hold our judgment in suspense, simply giving to the reader a succinct but faithful view of the principal reasonings relied upon by the advocates of each.”

CHAPTER XIX.

A CODE of moral and positive laws, replete with wisdom,—inculcating reverence to parents, gleanings to be left for the poor, forbidding stealing, or taking advantage of the deaf and blind, tale-bearing, uncharitableness, revenge, profanation of the Sabbath, consulting wizards, and oppression of the stranger.

CHAPTER XX.

PARTS OF SCRIPTURE OBSCURE YET IMPORTANT. GOD'S PEOPLE
A HOLY PEOPLE. MEANING OF THE WORD. WHAT IT INVOLVES.

FROM this chapter, which is not suitable for public or domestic reading, I select for study a single passage: verse 26:—

" And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

This is the summary and the embodiment of all of those peculiar laws among the ancient Hebrews, laid down in the chapters which it is not necessary or profitable to read in public worship. There is a design in all God's institutions, though we cannot always see that design; and an object that he has before him in everything he enacts, however peculiar or even trivial, it may appear to us. Because we cannot see the use of every peg in complicated machinery, it does not follow that it is of no use; instead of rashly pronouncing on the machine, that this is useless in it, because we cannot understand it, we should rather meekly pronounce on our own folly, and say, We are not enlightened enough to see it. So many of the institutions of Levi seem to us unnecessary; some of them would seem better to have been omitted; but you may depend upon it that all of them had a definite design, served a purpose that

has passed, or serve in some shape or purpose that does still exist, or will serve an end that has not yet come within the horizon of our view. All these several institutions in that ancient economy had one great design which we can understand—to insulate the Jewish people from the rest of mankind; to select, as it were, a fragment of humanity, to place it in the fairest sunshine, under the best social, ecclesiastical, and political circumstances; to hedge it round with ceremonies and rites, that should keep it distinct and separate from the rest of the nations of the earth; and to try, on a grand scale, what man would be with all these aids, and assistances, and promises, and encouragements, and rites, and ceremonies; and the result was, that the old trait came out in sunshine, as it had in shadow. “Man’s heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?” Now the laws, the various laws which the Jews received from God through the medium of Moses, were all meant to promote social, personal, political, national morality; to keep the people distinct from infecting elements around them, separated and hedged off from the possibility of contagion; so that whatever defiled them might be seen not to come from others, but to rise from the depths of their own fallen and depraved hearts. “Therefore I have separated you from all people, that ye might be unto me,” he says, “a peculiar people;” and the great end that he contemplated constantly was their holiness—that they might be a holy people. The word “holy,” in fact, means properly, separated, set apart to some purpose, or object, or end. But in order to make their holiness

still more likely, he presented ever before them a grand model. "Be ye holy," is his constant phrase, "for I the Lord am holy." "Ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy." It is well known that a people become, to a great extent, what their god or their gods are. The gods of the heathen were most of them monsters of lust. Jupiter was depraved; Mercury was a thief; others of their gods were infected with the greatest crimes; as if their villany upon earth gave them a title to a niche in the Pantheon of heathenism. You must expect, from such gods in the theology of a people, bad lives in the history of that people. If the model be so bad, how low must the imitator and the worshipper be!—But before the Jews there was placed the magnificent ideal of all that was holy, pure, just, perfect: the nearer they approached God, the nobler they became; the farther they receded from him, the more degenerate they became. They had the standard infinitely remote, but infinitely perfect; ceaseless approximation to which was their nation's strength, its glory, and its happiness. Thus the Jews were selected that they might be holy. They had a model constantly before them they were to imitate, that they might be holy. And they were chosen for this grand destiny, not because of their own virtues—for strange enough, their very mercies, the corruption of their hearts turned into their own merits; and the more God favoured them, with a perverse ingenuity the most remarkable, when we know it was so often rebuked, the more credit they took to themselves. Instead of being more humbled by a sense of what they deserved, and more thankful for the enjoyment of what they got,

they became proud and puffed up in their own mind, and needed to be taught, line upon line, so often, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee—lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.” And he tells them that he chose them, not because they were greater, or more excellent than any other nation, but because, in his own sovereignty, he set his love upon them. Thus they were hedged round with ceremonial laws; they had presented before them a perfect, infinitely perfect Model; they were selected by distinguishing grace in order to reach and strive after this great destiny; they had ringing in their ears, every day, the law, “Thou shalt love,” which is translated into practical language, “Thou shalt be holy,” in order that they might obtain the end for which they were chosen, and blessed, and favoured—to be a separated people, and a holy people to the Lord. Now, what the Jews were meant to be nationally, we Christians are meant to be personally. We, too, are selected and favoured for this purpose; and we shall find all the economy of the New Testament constantly contemplates the holiness of God’s people, as the great end, and object, and aim of our Christian privileges, and blessings, and mercies upon earth.

But, first of all, let us define what holiness is. I said, in the commencement of my remarks, it is, literally, separation. A thing that was set apart to evil is called holy. I have quoted to you before the word in the Hebrew, as applied to a person de-

voted to wickedness, just as it is applied to a person devoted to holiness. The word means simply separation. So the latin word *sacer*, from which comes our word *sacred*, is employed to denote profane, as well as sacred—means wicked, as well as holy. Hence the expression—

“Auri sacra fames,”

literally translated, “the sacred thirst of gold;” but strictly and properly, “the accursed thirst of gold.” The meaning therefore of a holy person is one severed or separated to something; and when applied to that which is pure, and just, and true, it means separated to God. And we can only form an idea of what holiness is by seeing it defined by God, as embodied in his character, and explained at length in his Word. The attribute of God himself—that is perhaps the most solemn, the most solemnizing, the most impressive—is the attribute of holiness. It is the balance, if I may so speak, of all the attributes of Deity. Power without holiness would degenerate into cruelty; omniscience without holiness would become craft; justice without holiness would degenerate into revenge; and goodness without holiness would be passionate and intemperate fondness, doing mischief rather than accomplishing good. You can see therefore that holiness pervading, linking together all the attributes of Deity, lend to God a grandeur, an august magnificence that a Christian can conceive, but a poet even cannot unfold. Holiness, then, as seen in God, is that attribute which is of supreme importance—gives fulness, glory, perfection, if one may so speak of God; for it is describing him in the language for human apprehension; and makes him

the Holy, Holy, Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity. Holiness on our part is acquiescence in this picture—admiration of it, thirst to approach to it, delight in the law that declares it and requires conformity to it. A rebel detests the law that condemns him; a Christian admires the equity, the glory, and the excellence of that law, even when that law condemns him. Holiness in a Christian is just separation, sanctification, severance from the excessive love of things lawful, from the forbidden love of things sinful, to the growing love of what God has commanded in his holy Word, and of the grand image that God has depicted in every page of his revelation.

Now having seen what this holiness is, let me state in the next place how Christians in the New Testament are constantly associated with it. First, they are elected to it. He has chosen us in Christ from the foundation of the world, that we should be holy. Many, not many, I hope, but some, hearing of the doctrine of election or predestination, would say, "He has predestinated or chosen us in Christ from the foundation of the world that we should give ourselves no trouble about the matter. If we are chosen we shall go to heaven; if not we shall never see it." That is the world's logic. But you observe the logic that is true belongs to a loftier level. It is so associated with practical character that there is no election, you may depend on it, where there is no holiness; there is no predestination where there is no piety; and wherever election is spoken of in the Bible, it is chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world, not that we may dispense with character, but that we should be holy and blameless before him. Again

we read, "God has called us to holiness;" and again, "Created in righteousness and true holiness;" and again, "Serve God in holiness all the days of your life;" and again, "Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord." So that we can see this holiness of character, whatever it be, is not the incidental characteristic of a few, but the grand and distinguishing feature of every true Christian; so much so, that to be without it is to be without the badge of heaven, the image and superscription of Him who has redeemed us by his precious blood. It is spoken of as necessary to worship, "Who shall ascend into the house of God? He that hath clean hands, and hath not lifted up his heart unto vanity." It is again prayed for by our Blessed Lord when he says, "Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth." Christ's righteousness upon us is our title, but this holiness within us is character. By Christ our state is changed; by the Holy Spirit our character is transformed. The first is our safety, the second is our fitness for the kingdom of heaven.

Now this holiness in the next place is true and lasting beauty; it is real and original beauty. I believe that all things on earth are but dim at best, and since sin entered, stained shadows of the great originals that are in heaven. We fancy because we are so enamoured with these things, that when the Bible uses things below to represent things above, it borrows aid from the earthly to set forth the splendour of the heavenly. But the truth is, the earthly is the copy; the heavenly is the original. And true beauty, therefore, is not the vulgar beauty that the eye admires, but that inner, moral beauty, which a

Christian deeply and truly sympathizes with. The true beauty of a Christian, or the true beauty of the Church—that is, the company of Christians—is not outward robe or ecclesiastical decoration, or architectural pomp and splendour, but moral excellence. The King's daughter has all her beauty within, that needs a spiritual eye to discriminate and discern. The mass of mankind can only see glare, pretension, gaudiness, but the true Christian sees a city where the world sees none; for Christ, when he came to his own, his own received him not; there was no beauty in him that the world should desire him. And it is said of Christians still, “The world knoweth us not;” that is, does not distinguish, discriminate, and admire us; just because spiritual things, in proportion as they are so, are foolishness to the natural man. But this true moral beauty with which the heart of a Christian is inlaid, which grows in splendour and in richness every day, is that which is real in the sight of God, and will outlive all the tints of flowers, all the colours of the rainbow, and all that man, as man, thinks fair and beautiful on earth.

And this holiness too of character is the highest possible honour. It is the livery of heaven; it is the very robes of the King of glory; it is the dress which he prepares for his own; it is the Apocalyptic garments “white and clean, which are the righteousness of saints;” it is the raiment white and clean which no moth can gnaw, which no rust can decay, which no thief can break through and steal.

And in the next place, this holiness is fitness for heaven. It is not our title to heaven; I have said

that is Christ's righteousness upon us; but it is our fitness for heaven. A man without an ear cannot enjoy music. Many have so defective taste that they cannot admire or appreciate the most beautiful painting; the commonest daub and the most brilliant production of one of the great masters would seem equally good or bad to them. So such persons are not fit for enjoying such things. In the same manner, a person without a sanctified heart, without holiness, is not fit for heaven. He could not breathe its air, he could not listen to its harmonies, he could not enter upon its duties; it would be a strange and an alien element, in which he could have no joy, because he is utterly unprepared, and unfit for it. Every creature is made for the sphere in which it is to move. The Christian is made for heaven; the lost sinner makes himself, not anybody else, for ruin. It is our fitness for heaven.

In the next place, it is the distinguishing mark of the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We distinguish churches by names, by geographical boundaries, by national features. But none of these are the true distinction of the Church of Christ; not baptism, not even the Lord's Supper, not outward rites, however proper, but inward character, is the true stamp and token of the people and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have no holiness, we may be Churchmen, or we may be Dissenters, but we are not Christ's people; if we have this inner holiness, the work of the Spirit within us, given by Christ to them that believe on his name, we may be Churchmen, or we may be Dissenters, or we may be neither; we are something better, we are Christians.

It is this that makes a Christian; and without this he cannot see God, or put forth any valid claim to be a Christian at all.

In the next place, the Holy Spirit is the Author of this holiness. We believe in a Trinity. I cannot see how it is possible for a Unitarian to get to heaven. God may deal with such in a way that I know not; but it seems to me that our ruin is so deep that it needs a Triune God to rescue us. We need the Father's electing love, we need the Son's redeeming love, we need the Holy Spirit's effective and sanctifying love. And hence it is promised that the Holy Spirit will take of the things of Christ, and show them to us—that he will make our bodies temples in which he will dwell—that he will regenerate our hearts, which must be born of the Holy Spirit—that he will comfort us and sanctify us, and be with us till we appear before God in Zion. And thus we need a Holy Spirit to regenerate us just as we need Christ to redeem us. He that speaks of baptismal regeneration just regards the Holy Spirit as he that accepts transubstantiation regards our Blessed Lord: in the case of the Tractarian divine, baptism is put in the room of the Holy Ghost; in the case of the Roman Catholic divine, the bread upon the altar is put in the room of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I do not know which is the greater sin; in all probability the former; it is at least as deadly, as fraught with pernicious and evil results. But let us never forget that no bread upon the altar can be a substitute for the living bread, Christ Jesus; and no water in the baptismal font can be a substitute for the Holy Spirit of God. No bread that a priest can consecrate can be turned into my

Saviour; no water that a presbyter can bless can take the place of the Holy Spirit and wash my heart. He who is God only can touch the heart, regenerate, retune, and reconsecrate it.

Thus we have seen what this holiness is, and who is the Author of it: let me notice now that all the institutions of the Gospel are meant to promote it. Preaching is meant to promote it—sacraments are meant to promote it—the reading of the Bible is meant to promote it—the teaching of teachers is meant to promote it; all our schools and institutions, our preaching and hearing, our praying and communicating, are all helps that, by the blessing of the Spirit of God, bring us nearer to Him who is the Fountain of all holiness, of all light, and of all life.

And in the next place, all the chastisements of God's providence are meant to promote this. The Apostle says so expressly. He says, "Our fathers verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

And lastly, a day will come when the Church, clothed in robes now stained and torn by the wear and tear of a fallen world, shall be arrayed in those bridal robes that are prepared for her by her Lord, and shall be presented to himself no longer a mutilated, imperfect, sin-stained widow, weeping, and seeking *the everlasting Husband to return, but a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

CHAPTER XXI.

OUTWARD SYMMETRY AND INWARD BEAUTY. THE JEWISH PRIEST.
THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER. EXAMPLE. MINISTER MUST BE
SENT BY HOLY SPIRIT. AMBASSADORS. MINISTERS APT
TO READ. PRAYERFUL. WHAT MINISTERS SHOULD NOT BE.
NOT LORDS OVER GOD'S HERITAGE. NOT COVETOUS. NOT
CONTENTIOUS. NOT MEN-PLEASERS. NOT GIVEN TO MUCH
WINE.

THE words I select from this chapter for special exposition are these:—

“ No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries : for I the Lord do sanctify them.”

Ver. 21—23.

I stated in the course of my remarks on a portion of the previous chapter, that there are parts of the Bible more adapted for private perusal than for public reading, but that in the chapters which we reasonably passed over in our Sabbath morning reading there were incidental texts valuable for instruction, precious in themselves, and also summaries of all the laws that regulated, peculiarly and temporarily regulated, that an-

cient economy. I have already directed your attention to the requirement in God's Word, "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." I showed that God's ancient people were sequestered and separated from the rest of heathendom in order that they might reflect the character of God, be a model nation, show what grace would make them; and that from being a mere crowd in the desert they became a congregation in the Tabernacle; from being a mob they became a people; from a nomade race of savages, they were by God's grace, for the benefit of surrounding nations, transformed into a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. I then showed from all this that what they were nationally, or rather what they were meant to be nationally, we believers, if we be such, are designed to be personally: for Peter says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a holy, royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."

Again, John in the Apocalypse speaks of us as "kings and priests unto God." And, therefore, what was national in the Jews becomes personal in us; and surrounded with richer privileges, inspired by yet richer grace, we ought to be a people on whom is sculptured more deeply and vividly the lineaments of that Perfect Example, that beautiful character, that Holy One, whose we are, and whom we profess to serve.

Now the passage I have selected for this evening's thought is, what the priest was required to be under the ancient Jewish economy. He must be of the race

of Aaron; in his outward form all that was symmetrical to commend him to the eye; not because outward appearance was essential in the service of God, but because every person and every thing, in that ancient economy, was a visible symbol to embody and to reflect round it a great moral and instructive truth. The Jewish priest was required to be in his person all that was symmetrical and well proportioned, not wounded, not crooked, simply to reflect a great truth, "Be ye holy that bear the vessels of the Lord." The shining tent, that is the body, was required to be perfect in the Jewish economy; the inner man is required to be holy, as a true priest in the holy place within, in our economy, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us from darkness into his marvellous light. It is, therefore, from this passage that I draw some instruction, less for the people, and more for those who are to preach to them, preside over them, and teach them the things that belong to their eternal peace. And it is one of the peculiarities of our religion, that there is nothing like what the ancient Egyptians had—what they called an esoteric and an isoteric truth, or a teaching for the crowd, and a teaching for the priest: but the same Book that contains the privileges and the duties of the people, contains also the duties and the obligations of the ministry: so that the people can see, by comparing the living original with the divine picture, whether their teachers have that true succession which consists not, as in the Jewish priesthood, in personal lineage, or personal descent, but in spiritual, moral, divine connection with, and likeness to, Him who sends the labourers into the harvest.

Now, the character of the priests here again reminds us how important it is that they, in the modern economy, who preach to their fellow-men, and teach the truth, and explain the way that leads to God, should be specimens of what their words teach. Nobody needs here to be told that character is more eloquent than words; that what a man is, makes a deeper, though it may be a slower impression, than what a man says. We estimate, in fact, the sincerity of a man's profession by the quiet consistency of his practice. If he speak like an angel, but live like a fallen fiend, we at once say the speaking is for an object, it is not sincere, the comment is inconsistent with the text, the character contradicts the teaching; and such teaching will have no influence, and exert no power upon mankind. Because we hear truth from a bad man, it does not follow that we are released from the responsibility of accepting it; but it is no less true, that truth so preached will not have much effect. There will be the irresistible contradiction of an inconsistent life staring the most eloquent statement out of countenance, and making the people feel that there is no reality in the utterance, because there is no harmony with it in the life. It is therefore most important now, as it was then, that they who preach the Gospel should not only, as the apostle says, live by the Gospel—as they may be willing enough to do,—but should also live the Gospel. Hence we have constantly set before us in the sacred Scriptures the importance of ministerial example; the duty of following that example when it is what it should be, in harmony with the great Exemplar set forth in Scripture. Besides, that a minister should

still more be watchful, or a teacher in a school, for it matters not how lowly or how lofty the position may be, if we seek to teach others—that such a one should be “zealous to maintain good works,” in the language of the apostle, is obvious from this; he is seen by more eyes, his profession rises to a loftier level, he will be tested by a higher standard, he will be sifted and searched, and lynx eyes and Argus eyes will all be upon him from every point of the compass, disposed to magnify defects into vices, and to diminish virtues into almost the reverse; such is the tendency of corrupt human nature. He, therefore, that occupies a lofty place in this world, whatever his profession be, ought to be circumspect. If he have, in addition to that, authority, he surely ought to be an example to those that are under him, of whatsoever things are pure, and just, and lovely. Only we must never confound the pretence of example with the reality. Real character is quiet, unassuming, unpretending. Wherever there is much noise, bright glare, loud pretension, an altered tone accommodated to a theme, thought to be the sacred one; an attitude, an aspect, and a pretension obviously put on, that is not the consistency of a Christian minister. One should just live and act with all the simplicity which one's inner feelings prompt, being sure that one is right at heart, and leaving the details of conduct to adapt themselves to the guiding, holy, and righteous influence that is within. True character is not something shaped from without, or put on, but something radiated from within, and reflected through the outer man upon the eyes of all that choose to behold it. Such a character is full of

power. It was said of Jesus, "Never man spake like this man;" but the reason of that was, that never man lived like this man; and if he had not so lived he had never so spoken. His words were so full of power, because they came clearly and directly from a heart charged with infinite love, sympathy, beneficence, and truth.

When one who teaches others, and occupies a prominent place, acts inconsistently with that teaching, those who hate the Gospel are too glad to get a handle for rejecting it. How often will you hear the sceptic and the infidel say, "I am not a Christian;" when you ask him why, he will say, "Do you notice how that bishop does, and how that rector acts, and how that minister behaves?" Well, but what does that prove? It only shows that in his heart the objector is conscious that this religion dictates a loftier standard than is usual; and the very reason that he gives for rejecting this religion implies the superiority of the precepts that make any inconsistency with it appear so obvious to him. Besides, if all men go wrong, that is no reason why we should do so. We are not to follow a multitude to do evil; and if all men's lives were to contradict this Book, that is no reason for our doing so; though it is matter of fact that inconsistency on the part of those that teach, will ever be a stumbling-block and an obstruction to the reception of the truth by those that hear. The greatest eloquence is the quiet consistency of a pure and true life; the truest apostolical succession is not proving our relation to the apostles by imaginary links; but showing that we belong, either by having transmitted to us their

beautiful example, their self-sacrifice, and speaking the words that they spoke of soberness and of truth. It is quite possible to sit in Moses' seat, and contradict Moses to his face. It is quite possible to be children of Abraham, according to the flesh, and yet take up stones to stone him who was Abraham's hope. No outer privilege, even if real, can be any substitute for inward life, consistent walk, faithful, true, and spiritual preaching. Having seen the necessity of a pure and good example, let me notice some other features in the minister of the Gospel, by which we can distinguish and discriminate what should be his character, and who a true minister is. The very first proof is, a true minister of Christ is sent by the Holy Spirit of God. I do not mean that the Spirit descends upon him visibly like a dove, or that a voice rends the heavens, and audibly says, "I commission this man;" but that he who believes he is called to the ministry in the providence of God, desires in his own heart to preach what he has learned, has the conviction that he has some capacity for doing so—has those chief features that are required of a minister by the apostle; and if so, he may be sure that he is called by the Holy Spirit, who anoints and calls his own into the vineyard. We read that the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them." And if I mistake not, in the ordinal of the English church, the minister to be ordained must confess that he is called by the Holy Ghost; a very solemn profession, a very awful one, if not true; but nothing can be more scriptural than to require such a profession, and nothing more essential

to a minister than the possession of that Holy Spirit. No ordination by presbyters, no ordination by a bishop, is worth one penny without the inner call and commission of the Holy Ghost; and that minister who is not so called, or so commissioned, or so taught, may be ordained by all the prelates and presbyters in Christendom; he runs unsent, and he is no more a true minister of the Gospel than was Judas, or any false and apostate teacher in early days.

The next feature in a true minister of the Gospel is, he is to be an ambassador from God. Who is an ambassador? This is the word used by an apostle. "We are ambassadors of God, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God." An ambassador's province is simply to convey from his own sovereign that sovereign's instructions to the court of another sovereign. He must not dilute them, nor add to them, nor modify them. He is the best ambassador who conveys most clearly the instructions of his court, and enforces them with the ablest, the strongest, and the truest reasons. So a minister of the Gospel is an ambassador from God. His chart is the Bible, and his duty is to unfold, explain, and enforce it; to add nothing to it, to subtract nothing from it, but to present it in every light, to follow it up with every argument, and to press upon the consciences and hearts of the people that great message that he carries with him from the King of kings, and Lord of lords. If the ministers of the Gospel be ambassadors, they cannot be what are called sacrificing priests: and for this obvious reason;—a priest is a person that deals with God on behalf of man; but an ambassador is

one that deals with man on behalf of God ; just the opposite. If, therefore, a man be a sacrificing priest, he is not an ambassador ; if he be an ambassador, he cannot be a sacrificing priest. And, therefore, he in the Christian Church who now says he is to offer sacrifices for men, lays aside all pretension to be an ambassador. He does not come down from God to deal with me on God's behalf ; but he professes to go up to God, to deal with God on my behalf. And, therefore, if he be a priest, he is not one of the Christian ministry. I spoke of a requirement in the English ordinal. The Romish ordinal, according to which priests are ordained, ordains them not for anything approaching to Christianity. For instance, when a priest in the Church of Rome is ordained, there is put into his hand a patten for holding bread, and a cup for holding wine, and the bishop that ordains him commissions him to go and offer the soul and divinity, the flesh and blood of the Son of God, a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead ; but not one word about preaching, not one word about the Bible. He may be a Christian before—I do not judge him in that ; but the man ordained to be a Roman Catholic priest is no more, in virtue of his ordination—do not mistake me—a Christian minister, than he is a Mahometan mufti. He does not undertake a single Christian function ; he is not ordained to execute one ; he is not enjoined even to read the Bible : and one priest I know told me he never saw a Bible till many years after he was ordained a priest in that Church. The Christian minister, however, is ordained, in the language of the apostles, to preach the Gospel ; he is appointed to teach, as an ambassador from God,

to a minister than the possession of that Holy Spirit. No ordination by presbyters, no ordination by a bishop, is worth one penny without the inner call and commission of the Holy Ghost; and that minister who is not so called, or so commissioned, or so taught, may be ordained by all the prelates and presbyters in Christendom; he runs unsent, and he is no more a true minister of the Gospel than was Judas, or any false and apostate teacher in early days.

The next feature in a true minister of the Gospel is, he is to be an ambassador from God. Who is an ambassador? This is the word used by an apostle. "We are ambassadors of God, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled unto God." An ambassador's province is simply to convey from his own sovereign that sovereign's instructions to the court of another sovereign. He must not dilute them, nor add to them, nor modify them. He is the best ambassador who conveys most clearly the instructions of his court, and enforces them with the ablest, the strongest, and the truest reasons. So a minister of the Gospel is an ambassador from God. His chart is the Bible, and his duty is to unfold, explain, and enforce it; to add nothing to it, to subtract nothing from it, but to present it in every light, to follow it up with every argument, and to press upon the consciences and hearts of the people that great message that he carries with him from the King of kings, and Lord of lords. If the ministers of the Gospel be ambassadors, they cannot be what are called sacrificing priests: and for this obvious reason;—a priest is a person that deals with God on behalf of man; but an ambassador is

one that deals with man on behalf of God; just the opposite. If, therefore, a man be a sacrificing priest, he is not an ambassador; if he be an ambassador, he cannot be a sacrificing priest. And, therefore, he in the Christian Church who now says he is to offer sacrifices for men, lays aside all pretension to be an ambassador. He does not come down from God to deal with me on God's behalf; but he professes to go up to God, to deal with God on my behalf. And, therefore, if he be a priest, he is not one of the Christian ministry. I spoke of a requirement in the English ordinal. The Romish ordinal, according to which priests are ordained, ordains them not for anything approaching to Christianity. For instance, when a priest in the Church of Rome is ordained, there is put into his hand a patten for holding bread, and a cup for holding wine, and the bishop that ordains him commissions him to go and offer the soul and divinity, the flesh and blood of the Son of God, a sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead; but not one word about preaching, not one word about the Bible. He may be a Christian before—I do not judge him in that; but the man ordained to be a Roman Catholic priest is no more, in virtue of his ordination—do not mistake me—a Christian minister, than he is a Mahometan mufti. He does not undertake a single Christian function; he is not ordained to execute one; he is not enjoined even to read the Bible: and one priest I know told me he never saw a Bible till many years after he was ordained a priest in that Church. The Christian minister, however, is ordained, in the language of the apostles, to preach the Gospel; he is appointed to teach, as an ambassador from God,

a presbyter, an evangelist, a bishop, an apostle, or whatever other name there may be by which he is known.

One other character is given to the ministry; its subjects are stewards. The apostle says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Servants for duty, stewards for responsibility. A steward has charge of much; if he keep back what he ought to put forward, or put forward what he ought to keep back, or supersede what he should preach by something not from the source and fountain, he is unfaithful, and does not act like a steward of God. On opening the Epistles of Paul, it is remarkable how very emphatic are all the various requirements in the minister of the Gospel, and how little he speaks of any of those things thought so valuable by some. First of all, it is said he must be one holding the mystery of the truth in a pure conscience. He must be self-denying. The minister of the Gospel must be self-denying; denying himself many things that he would like for the sake of those to whose good he is sent to minister. The apostle says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway"—that is, disapproved as a minister of Christ. Another feature given by the apostle of a minister is one "apt to teach." It is not enough that one should be a scholar; that is most important: but how often do you find that men whose minds are walking encyclopædias of knowledge, are not able, on the platform, or in the pulpit, or anywhere else, to speak five minutes connected sentences

unfolding what their minds contain. It may be, as some one satirically said, that the emptiest minds can speak easiest, as the emptiest churches empty fastest : it may be so, but still it is a fact, that many a richly-stored mind has not the gift of speaking its thoughts, and that many a one, with very little in the mind, has the power of making the most of that little. But it is a requirement in a minister of the Gospel, not only that his mind shall be well stored, not only that he shall be well instructed—and in the present day the very highest scholarship is most important in the ministry—but that also he shall be apt to teach ; that is, have the power of speaking what he thinks, clothing his ideas with simple and appropriate language. The very best way to do so, is never to be anxious while we speak about the words, but only to be sure of thoughts, and words are certain to follow. There can be no difficulty in clothing a thought that we clearly understand with plain words ; and whenever you do not understand a sermon, it is not because the subject is difficult, but because the minister has not the power of speaking clearly what he wishes to convey. The plainest and the most transparent sermons are always the ablest ; the grandest sermons are always the worst. What we want is simplicity of speech, clearness of thought. We are travellers in a dark night, and in a weary way ; and the plainest sign-post that tells us the road we are to take, if not of the finest wood, or the most beautiful painting, is the most useful, because it is most easily read as it is most intelligibly written.

Again, it is said that ministers are not only to be apt to teach, but also to think of their flocks at the

throne of grace. "Always," says the apostle, "in every prayer of mine for you." He says again, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man."

Having shown, then, from the requirement of the ancient Jewish priest, what the modern Christian minister should be—holy and consistent in his conduct, intelligible and plain in his speech—let me show, by reference to the same source, some things that ministers should not be. The apostle is particular in laying down the negative side, if I may so speak, of ministerial character. First, they ought not to be, says the apostle, lords over God's heritage; that is, they ought not to dictate, but persuade. They ought not to say "It is so," because they think so; but it is so, because "thus saith the Lord." A lord over God's heritage is one that dictates what is his own instead of enforcing, exhibiting, and alleging what God has said in his Word. The pulpit ought to reflect the Scriptures, sermons to be the multiplied echoes of the Bible, and what the minister says should derive its authority, not from his learning, but from God's holy Word. A second negative requirement in the modern Christian minister is, that he shall not be greedy of filthy lucre. Over and over again this is reiterated and repeated in the Scriptures. Paul could say, "I have coveted no man's silver, nor gold, nor apparel." I believe nothing has done greater injury to the Church universal than the evident symptoms given, but not often, I believe, of minis-

ters of the Gospel at all hazards hastening to be rich, ready to sacrifice duty for profit. Such a taste, such covetousness, such avarice eats like a canker into real piety, corrodes their whole character, takes away all force from what they say, and makes them absolutely useless. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre.” I do not think that ministers of the Gospel should be poor: that is often as inconvenient as it is dangerous to be excessively rich; and I do not agree with the laity that a layman may be as rich as Croesus, but that what is a virtue in a layman, is almost sin in a clergyman. I cannot see that there is any sin in being rich, if your riches are honestly acquired, or that there is any virtue in being poor; and if riches in a layman be not sin, it cannot be sin in a clergyman; and if they be dangerous in a clergyman, they must *à fortiori* be dangerous in a layman. But if riches come in the providence of God, you are responsible for the use of them. But if you are not rich, to set your heart upon riches, and hasten to be rich, or to make so much of the little that you have, that it absorbs all your thoughts, that is to be greedy of filthy lucre, to covet other men’s silver, gold, and apparel, or to take the oversight of the flock from wrong and sinful motives. To enter into the Church to get a living as the main end is scandalous; to enter into the Church as a minister to serve God, and to expect that you will get bread to eat, and raiment to put on, is common sense and reason. The minister of the Gospel must have bread to eat, and raiment to put on; and if he ministers to you in spiritual things, the Church,

the nation, or the congregation, or whatever may be the source, ought to minister to him in temporal things; nothing is more reasonable. But when pre-ferment, the loaves and the fishes, are made the dominant and the chief things, then that is sin. But yet I will venture to assert—and it is needful to assert it in these days—infidels, and persons of sceptic and anti-christian minds, constantly fling in the face of the ministers of the Gospel that they are fond of wealth. Now what is the fact? If all the wealth of the Church of England, which is one of the richest bodies, were thrown into one common fund, and divided equally among all its rectors, curates, vicars, bishops, each would get about £190 a-year; that would be the sum total; the calculation has been made. I think no curate ought to have less than £200, and no rector less than £500 a-year; and if I could I would take from the higher bishops in order to enrich the lower ministers. And if you take the Scotch Church again, which has been supposed to be the poorer; if all the money in that Church were thrown into a coffer, it would give £300 a-year to each; so that we are in that respect richer than the Church of England; not richer in reality, but richer in more equal distribution. If you examine the subject calmly and dispassionately, you will see that of the ministers of the Gospel it cannot be said that they are greedy of filthy lucre—it cannot be said that they are extravagantly rich; and this applies to dissenters as much as to churchmen; and therefore the smart remarks of sceptics are really not just or true; they are meant to injure that blessed Gospel to

which we are the witnesses, and of which we are the preachers.

Another negative in the character of ministers of the Gospel is, that they should not be contentious, not self-willed, not turbulent, not of a quarrelsome spirit, not taking offence at little matters, not angry with a brother because that brother in every jot and tittle does not concur with them. Another negative is, not men-pleasers. The apostle says, "If I should please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." And again, he says, "Not as pleasing men, but God;" that is, sacrificing a great man's smile, a rich man's countenance, for Christ's sake; not caring who shall take offence, if you are only sure that you speak the truth in a kind, Christian, and conciliatory spirit. It is possible to speak truth bitterly, just as it is possible to speak what is false lovingly; but very often truth spoken bitterly and violently has less chance of success than a falsehood spoken with great plausibility and kindness. Let us, therefore, proclaim the truth; try to convey the most unpalatable truths, if we cannot in the most palatable language, at least with a most conciliatory, sympathizing, and kindly spirit. Let us ever show it is to win souls, not to give offence. Let us remember that men are differently constituted, and that truth needs to be presented to sinful, erring man, with great tenderness and forbearance. It is not God on Sinai that speaks from the pulpit, but frail man compassed about with like infirmities, himself needing to feel and to exemplify the truths that he speaks and preaches.

The next negative character is, "not given to much

wine ;" it is one of the characteristics that the apostle lays down ; and this seems to have been then a very important requirement, and from what one reads it is no less now. "Not given to much wine ;" not the prohibition of it, but the limitation of it. If what is called the Teetotal principle, however good and valuable it may be, had been an apostolical one, I do submit it would have been said, "not daring to taste wine :" but it is not so ; "not given to much wine ;" therefore some may be taken, but it must not be taken in excess ; and evidently the ruling principle is, "a little wine for thy stomach's sake"—a little wine for the sake of your health, if you find it requisite. What a vast amount of common sense is there in the Bible ! The more one reads this Blessed Book the more one feels what Howells said of it, "It is common sense inspired." There is that in this Book which so commends itself to one's good sense, apart from its inspiration, that we cannot resist the conclusion—if this Book was not inspired by God, the men who wrote it left behind them a more stupendous miracle than any one they have yet recorded. The wine in the apostle's days must surely have been what is called alcoholic wine ; I admit not like our wines, which, to suit our very depraved taste and appetite, are mixed with an enormous quantity of alcohol. The wine in the East had about seven per cent. alcohol ; our strongest wines have twenty per cent. But then there was some alcohol : if there was none, why should the apostle have said, "not given to much wine ?" He would not say, "not given to much water," because there was no risk of water doing any injury. The very fact that he limits the

quantity, shows that the wine then used was alcoholic or stimulating, and that it required restraint, regulation—not prohibition. But no doubt the less used the better. They that can do without it are best without it; and it is a question left open for Christian men to discuss, whether the best example is total abstinence from it, or the moderate use of it: they are only wrong who base prohibition upon the Bible; they who base it on expediency take fair ground that is open to discussion.

These are the elements of the Christian minister, laid down in Scripture, suggested by the consideration of the ancient Jewish priests. And you, the people, now take the minister as the messenger of God. "Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Secondly, wait on his instruction. The least you can do is, to listen to the minister. A minister will always preach better when he speaks to a listening and attentive auditory; and a stated minister will always be encouraged when he sees the same places filled by the same listeners, desirous to taste the bread, and drink the water of life. In the next place, follow their example as far as they follow Christ. "Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ." "Be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example." And, again, pray for them. The apostle frequently, in all his Epistles, asks the prayers of the people to whom he was attached, and who were attached to him. In the Epistle to the Romans, more than once he does so. "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye

strive together with me in your prayers for me." And again, in Ephesians, when he bids them take the whole armour of God, he says, " Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints ; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel." And pray, in the next place, for the increase of it. I trouble myself less about ecclesiastical machinery ; I think more of the importance of Christ's rule in the midst of his Church. If he send forth labourers into the harvest, it matters not whether layman, or people, or presbyter appoint them. Satan will be glad to see Christian people wrathful with each other about Church politics, if he can only keep them from fulfilling the grand precept, " Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into the harvest."

The Great Patron of the church is in the skies. Those whom He sends are holy and true and chosen. Those that enter unsent, whatever excellencies they have, want that which is vital.

CHAPTER XXII.

RULES FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE PRIESTS.

THIS chapter is so peculiar to the Jewish priesthood, and so entirely occupied about ceremonial uncleannesses, that, while it has its place, its value, and its use, it is not for edification to read it in the family. By stating the various causes that operated as ceremonial impediments to the priest's discharge of his sacerdotal functions, it reveals, on the one hand, how human nature has been tainted in its moral condition by the fall, and how deeply that taint has struck into the physical economy of man : it shows, on the other hand, that "holiness becometh the Lord's House," and that they should "be clean who bear the vessels of the Lord."

The closing portions of this chapter are occupied with the regulation of the sacrifices to be offered, and require that they too should be free from all blemish and defect. The worship we offer, and the worshippers that offer it, should be holiness to the Lord.

The only perfect priest was Christ Jesus—the first and the last : the only perfect sacrifice ever offered was His. A day approaches when the whole company

of true believers shall be presented to the Lord a glorious church, without spot or blemish or any such thing; and all matter that we now see disinfected of its evil, and consecrated afresh, shall also be holiness to the Lord.

CHAPTER XXIII.

END OF JEWISH FESTIVALS. EFFECTS OF, ON THE TRIBES AND NATION. INSPIRATION. PASSIVE THANKFULNESS FOR HARVESTS. PENTECOST. GLEANINGS FOR THE POOR. A MARGIN FOR THE NEEDY. FEAST OF TRUMPETS. FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

THIS chapter ought properly and naturally to succeed the nineteenth chapter of this book, in which was stated the great fact of the annual festival of atonement, and after which follow properly, and in order, the various feasts or festivals recorded in this chapter. In this book we have read, first of all, rules for persons; secondly, for holy places; thirdly, for holy habits; and we have now the regulations laid down for the government of the children of Israel in reference to the appointment of their festivals. Many of the laws contained in this Book are now, of course, necessarily obsolete, because their subjects are superseded by the great ends and objects of which they were foreshadows. But many of these laws, however minute they may appear to us, and however unnecessary, because we live in an enlightened age where the indirect light of Christianity is sufficient almost to instruct the masses—were necessary then; and they have been, some of them, at least, the guiding laws of the most enlightened nations in every age of the world. Many laws that were necessary

for the infancy of a professing church need not be retained and observed in the mature years of that church; and yet their importance in their place and for their object cannot be over estimated, and ought not to be lightly regarded. Many parts of this book are necessarily for personal study; other parts of it were suitable for the priests only; but other parts of it are full of the richest evangelical truths; —it being the Gospel in shadow, just as St. John is the Gospel with life and immortality clearly brought to light.

Now the Hebrew word here rendered “feasts” might with much greater propriety be rendered “assemblies,” or convocations, or institutions. It was not necessarily a feast in the sense of a participation of good things; but it was properly a gathering together of the people for the offering of sacrificial rites, in order to impress upon their minds great truths, and to be, as it were, to them the alphabet of that Gospel that was to be more fully revealed. You can see the vast importance of these institutions in two or three points of view; in one a moral, in another, in some degree, a political. For instance, the Jews were divided into twelve tribes; these tribes were, in some degree, by that division insulated or mechanically detached and separated from each other, each with peculiar interests; but by these great festivals or institutions which occurred every year, at stated intervals, the whole twelve tribes came across the geographical boundaries that severed them, and met together around the same altar, offering the same sacrifices, singing the same grand songs, and worshipping together the same God—the God of Abraham, of Isaac,

and of Jacob. And thus this communion of all the scattered tribes in one on these several occasions was calculated to break up every idea of separation, and to show them they were all the children of one Blessed Father, and as they were loved of God they ought as friends to love one another. In the second place these institutions were politically important—for God rules in a nation as well as among individuals. I have told you often, that the Jewish race was separated from the rest of mankind, in order to preserve, in all its purity, the worship of the only living and true God. It was, therefore, part and parcel of the polity of Leviticus, as far as polity was given in it, to make them depend for all their supplies as much as possible upon internal resources. If they had been dependent for their corn upon foreign nations, the consequence would have been, they would have gone out and mingled with those idolatrous nations, and those nations, the moment they came to be at war with the children of Israel, would have withheld from them that bread which was essential to their maintenance as a people, and to their separation and distinctness as a believing and a Christian people. These institutions, therefore, necessarily gave birth to a vast amount of internal traffic; caravans coming across wide or parched deserts—camels, and asses, and oxen, carrying loads from place to place, introduced a sort of circulation, not of money, but of that which is the end of money—goods; and the consequence was that every place was visited by those that had to sell; and every one that wanted found the things that he required: and thus a sort of internal traffic was kept up amid all the

tribes of Israel, that made them by one part of the law more independent of the will of foreigners; and, secondly, gave them commercial intercourse at home, sufficient for a nation in that infant state in which they were at that time. One can see, therefore, a large amount of practical and characteristic wisdom disclosed in all these institutions, which shows the highest inspiration; and the inference from the study of it must be, that a nomad and semi-barbarous race—for so they were in the desert—never could have struck out such a masterly polity, or made the arrangements that are here given. It is far less credulous to believe that God instituted these, than that a barbarous race struck the theory out of their own minds.

Having seen the reason of these institutions, let me notice that in this chapter there is given, first of all, the passover. The passover is described, as it had been previously, in the fifth verse: “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord’s passover.” The Jewish ecclesiastical year began with April—the civil year began with September; and, therefore, the festival of the passover was celebrated in April, just about the time of the subsequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper, that now very properly and justly succeeds it. After describing the passover, which we have had delineated and recorded in the Book of Exodus, we have next the festival of the sheaf of first-fruits, beginning at the ninth verse. He tells them that when they reap the harvest “they shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of their harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord.” This was a beautiful institution, to teach the Israelite that it was not

the soil, nor the rain drops, nor the sun-beams, nor the dews, nor the skill of their agriculturists, that they had to thank for their bounteous produce; but that they must rise above the sower and the reaper, and see God the good giver of the golden harvest, and make his praise the key-note of their harvest home. Thus, all Israel was to do then what we should do still—praise God for every temporal blessing that we have; either for the bounteous harvest, or for health, or for profits in trade, or for success in business. Whatever good thing passes to you in the providence of God, is a voice proclaiming in the desert, “Praise ye the Lord.”

After this, we have the Feast of Pentecost. The Feast of Pentecost was to be fifty days—seven weeks, that is, seven times seven, forty-nine, and a day over, fifty—fifty days after the feast we have just now referred to. It was made much more of by the Jews than was originally meant of God, because it did happen that the fiftieth day was the day of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and though it was not intended to commemorate that event, the Jews attached so much importance to the event, that they called the Pentecost “the day of the commission or giving of the law.”

After this we have a very beautiful provision—the gleanings that are to be left for the poor; that when you reap your corn you are to take care not to cut down everything, but to leave a little for the poor: “When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and

to the stranger : I am the Lord your God." I think one of the most beautiful traits in the provision and economy of God in the Old Testament Scriptures is the constant reference to the poor. The permanency of the rich and the poor is what Christ himself has declared ; there will be rich and poor as long as this dispensation lasts ; and any attempt to break down the distinction entails calamity on the nation that makes it. The distinction does exist, and will exist as long as men live, and intellectual energies differ in degree—for the fact is, men are not all equal ; they may talk as they will that all men are equal. In one sense, before God, all men are equal ; but in another respect they are not. One man has more physical energy or more mental energy than another. One man has more skill than another, one man more activity than another ; and several things are constantly keeping up that broad and palpable distinction between them that have, and them that have not. But just as the Israelite reaper left some ears of corn for the poor and for the stranger, so you, in estimating your labours, which are to you for all practical purposes your corn-fields, in arranging your profits, your gains, your losses, ought to have a balance or a margin for the benefit of the poor, the destitute, and the needy. God especially blessed a nation that took care of the poor ; and God still provides for and pronounces blessed those that consider the poor. I know that what are called "poor's rates" are extremely objectionable ; because, when you pay your poor's rates you give a tax, and when the poor get in the work-house, the bread that it buys they take it as a

right ; and the consequence is, all benevolence on your part is quenched, and all gratitude on the part of the poor is ruined also. But then, such is the hardness of the human heart in so many cases, that a wise and merciful government is bound to make the law, and to compel that as a right which many would much rather give as the act of benevolence and kindness.

But because you do pay poor's rates you still must leave a margin to give something ; for those rates are not yet intolerable ; and on all occasions we should be delighted that we have an opportunity of making the heart of the widow rejoice, and the orphan sing for joy. There is an opportunity for this in what I have seen noticed in many of the papers in the present day,—the destitution of soldiers' wives, and I hope that those that see the opportunity will attend to it. Those soldiers whom we have sent abroad to fight the battles of our country have left behind them wives and children, so far as I can gather from public sources of information, almost destitute. Now, I think it will be a great disgrace to our nation, if we leave them so ; and I hope that those who have the means of contributing to this object will avail themselves of it, and feel it not a tax exacted from them, but a happy occasion of exercising the highest beneficence towards those, whom the brave and willing defenders of our country, its institutions and its rights, have been compelled by their position to leave behind them. No man ever died poorer because he gave to the poor ; and I have noticed that the most unhappy men are the men that are always getting, never giving. If you want to be

really happy, give; if you wish to be thoroughly wretched, withhold what is meet. There is a great law which is universally true, "It is more blessed," or there is more happiness, "to give than to receive."

We have after this the Feast of Trumpets, which began the civil year of the Jews. And how very striking the thought, that the trumpets should sound at the commencement of a new year, and that the name of God should, upon that occasion, be blessed and praised. The Jews, even at the present day, are in the habit of celebrating this; they say, "Glory be to God the Father, hosannah;" and then, "Glory be to the Redeemer, hosannah; glory be to the Seeker, hosannah,"—a sort of foreshadow of the Trinity, or a Triune Jehovah, still preserved among them. We have next the Feast of Tabernacles, to one of the main rites of which I will direct your minds in the sermon from the Gospel of St. John; where they dwelt in booths or tents, to commemorate the fact that they dwelt in tents in the desert. The Jews of modern times preserve this idea; and on this day they collect plants of citron and the palm tree, and the small branches of them they carry in their hands, and walk in procession round the reading-desk of their synagogue; as a faint fragmental remain of the one ancient and illustrious institution.

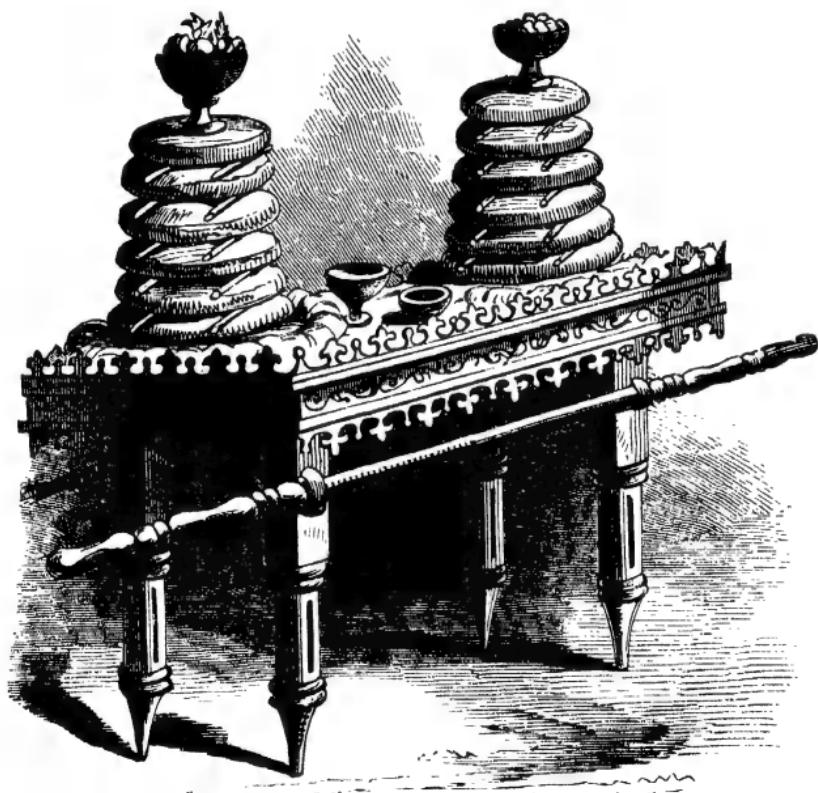


TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD.

Leviticus xxiv.]

CHAPTER XXIV.

INFANT CHRISTIANITY. GROWTH. OIL FOR THE LAMPS. MANY CONGREGATIONS ONE CHURCH. A CHRISTIAN. TRUE CHURCH. SHEWBREAD. THE BLASPHEMER. CONSCIENCE AND CIVIL INTERFERENCE. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. LEX TALIONIS.

IT is most important that we should constantly bear in mind that the Christians of the Levitical economy were the infants, if I may so speak, or the youths, of the Christian dispensation. They needed to be constantly taught by visible and impressive symbols, each symbol the pedestal of a great and precious truth, and inculcating that truth through the senses, and thereby making the deepest and most permanent impression on the mind. It is quite certain that whatever defects may exist in the Christian Church now, in innumerable particulars it has grown in purity, in wisdom, and in capacity of receiving the truths that are revealed in this blessed book. Among the very first symbols appointed in this chapter, is the pure beaten oil for the lamps that were "to burn continually without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation." Now we find that John in the Apocalypse uses the very imagery that is here, to set forth the completeness, the unity, and yet the variety of the Christian Church. The seven candlesticks, or the seven branches of the one candlestick, are seven churches ;

all the seven knit together in one golden stem ; and through that stem rushing into each tube, and supplying each lamp with the most precious and perfumed oil, beaten oil rising from the stem and enabling it thus to burn. Now we have in that image the most complete exhibition of the variety of the Christian Church. It is not one stem, there are seven stems. There is not one visible church, but many visible congregations, all of them, greater or less, constituting together the one universal or Catholic Church. It was never meant that there should be but one visible economy, but many differing economies ; having their unity not in the uniformity of A to B, and B to C, but in the unity of all with the central stem to which they are all knit. So is it now in the Christian Church. The discipline of the church is temporary, but the doctrines of the church are eternal. In ecclesiastical polity, it has varied, and it will vary ; in essential attachment to the Saviour, trust in his sacrifice, love of vital and essential truth, it has been one in every age. The oil that supplied it was oil that rose from the stem, penetrated the branches, and thus fed the flame. I need not remind you how that very image is constantly used to denote the Holy Spirit of God. "Anointed with the Spirit ;" and again, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One." The name "Christ" is "The Anointed One ;" and the name Christian literally "a person consecrated by oil." But what oil ? The Holy Spirit of God ; of whom oil is in the ancient economy the expressive symbol.

Then the object of this candlestick was to give light in the tabernacle. So the object of a church is to give light ; and if it fail to give light it is worthless. The

best candlestick would not be that which gave least light, but most ; and no exquisite beauty of its chasing, no amount of gold in its composition, would be any compensation for its failing to do that which is its end and its mission, to give light to them that are in the household. Better a bright light that will enable you to read upon a brass or an iron candlestick, than a dim burning one upon a golden or a silver one. Better a church that lights people to heaven, though it have many imperfections, than a church all splendour and magnificence that does not show a person across the road even. The very end and object of a Christian is to be a light ; and that is the best church that casts the light upon the truths of the Bible, the problems of the soul, the hopes of the Christian, the way that leads to glory.

After the representation of the candlestick we have the bread for a memorial before the Lord. This bread consisted of twelve loaves upon a table of gold ; and had two meanings ; probably one was to bring the produce of the fields of the earth under the roof of the sanctuary of God, that it might be seen that the same God who saves the soul and feeds it with living bread, also supplies the wants of the body, and makes the corn to grow upon the earth to bring forth abundance for man and for beast. Or, secondly, it may have been designed to show that there was a higher want than the want of the bread that perisheth ; that there is in man's soul a need, a hunger for the bread that endureth unto life eternal ; which the viands of nature never could furnish, which God must send as he sent the manna — directly and immediately from heaven. And lastly, it was used to be food for Aaron and the

priests ; everything being consecrated in that sanctuary, and associated in some way with God, and the hopes of heaven and of eternity.

Then, in the midst of this statement, there is introduced—though one cannot exactly see its connexion—an incident, and that incident fraught with important instruction. But what is blaspheming the name of God ? It is attributing to God wickedness, and sin, and crime. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, we read in the New Testament, was asserting that the miracles which Jesus did by the Spirit were done by Satan, the prince of the power of the air. And this blasphemy in Israel had two aspects. First, it was a spiritual offence to be visited on the soul, if persisted in, at the judgment-seat ; but, secondly, it was a civil act of treason against the King of kings : the Jews living under a theocracy, everything that was done against God was not only an act of the conscience against the Lord of the conscience, but an act of a subject who was in rebellion against his only King of glory and supreme majesty. You can see therefore that the visiting of blasphemy with civil penalties, was in some degree peculiar to that economy. I am not lawyer enough to know, but I believe that in many, if not in most modern nations, blasphemy in its revolting shapes has been visited even with civil penalties. Except as an offence against others, perhaps it should not be so ; whatever relates to the conscience is between that conscience and God. But whenever a man makes his religion a pretext, or his conscientious convictions an excuse for injuring, insulting and offending others, then it is time, I think, that interference

should take place. It is all very well to say, "I ought not to be punished for this, because it is my conscientious conviction." Why, if a number of Hindoos were to come here, and if they were to propose to burn a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband at Charing-Cross, I venture to assert that the authorities would very properly interfere. But if the Hindoo were to say, "That is part of my religion." "Very true," the magistrate would say, "it is so; but the laws of England say it shall not be done; and that is an end of it," and very justly so. So again, if a person came here from the Pope of Rome, and said, "I am governor of Essex and Middlesex," and on your objecting, he were to say, "That is part of my religion; I must have a diocese here," I must directly tell him, "The laws of England say it is not so, and that it shall not be done;" and he cannot be a loyal subject who would persist in doing what the laws strictly and simply prohibit. So that the moment, you observe, that one's conscientious conviction becomes no longer an enjoyment of his own, but an inconvenience to his neighbour, it is right for the sake of society that the conscientious conviction should be kept within its own bounds, and restricted to its own proper orbit. So now, blasphemy was in Israel, not simply a moral offence, though, as I showed you, even in that light it may become an offence to the public, but it was also a civil offence—disloyalty and rebellion against the King of kings.

There are, next, laws enacted for certain crimes. He that kills a beast shall make it good; he, however, that kills a man must be put to death. I cannot, I must say, agree with those who assert that

capital punishment is forbidden in Scripture. I do think, on the contrary, for certain crimes—for the crime of murder for instance, capital punishment is repeatedly sanctioned in Scripture. It was sanctioned at the Flood ; and it does not seem to be a law peculiar to that economy, but universal. It is based upon the fact that to kill a man is the greatest outrage upon the image of God ; and it is not a Levitical, but a universal law, that “ Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” At the same time, I think that it is the only crime which should be so visited.

After this we read in the twentieth verse, “ There shall be breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” Now some persons will say this contradicts another and equally inspired part of the Bible. Our blessed Lord, you will all recollect, in Matthew v., says that this shall not be the case. “ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” Now, how do we explain the apparent contradiction ? This explains it. The eye for the eye, and the tooth for the tooth, was the civil economy of Israel under a theocracy, a Divine magistrate ; the law for public offences carried out by the public magistrate, inflicted in a public manner, was “ an eye for an eye,” or the *lex talionis*, a tooth for a tooth, and so on. But our blessed Lord is speaking here of what Christians are

to be with one another ; and he says, in your dealings one with another, the *lex talionis* is not to apply ; it must not be an eye for an eye ; but it must be, in individuals dealing with each other, “ He that will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” Here it is a public civil law, carried out and inflicted by the public magistrate ; in Matthew v. it is private individual intercourse, in which, and in course of which, no such principle is to be carried into practice, no such law to be acted on. It is one thing for a magistrate to inflict the legal penalty for an offence ; it is quite another thing for a private individual to take the law into his own hands and profess to help that law. So that you observe passages that seem to be in antagonism, are found when looked at in their proper light to be in harmony. So, again, that other passage which those excellent Christians, called Friends, misinterpret : “ Thou shalt not swear, but let thy yea be yea, and thy nay, nay.” Under the ancient economy they were to swear, if before a magistrate and so required : and our Lord does not repeal that ; but he says, in your private, personal intercourse with each other as Christians, you are not to try to make yourselves believed by backing it with that vulgar thing, profane swearing, an appeal to God, or an oath ; but you are to say, it is so, or not so ; and the man that will not believe your word, depend upon it will not believe it if oaths or profane swearing are mixed with it. Our Lord does not say, you shall not take an oath before a magistrate ; nothing of the kind ; but what he says is, that in your private intercourse you are not to do

so. He does not say that those laws of the Jews are repealed in reference to legal enactments ; but in your private intercourse with each other it is to be love for hatred, coals of fire upon the head; overcoming evil with good.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE JUBILEE. PROVISION AGAINST MONOPOLY. BALANCE OF SOCIETY. INSTALMENTS. THE FUTURE REST.

THIS chapter is one of those merciful provisions that are so frequently scattered over the ancient economy of God; and indicate as institutions in that uncultivated age, not the invention of man, but the revelation of Him who is full of goodness, and tender mercy, and forbearance, and forgiveness to the sins of men. The arrangement made in this chapter was to the following effect. Every seventh year was to be what is called a "jubilee" year, so called from the sounding of the trumpet that announced it. Then every seven times seventh year, or seven sevens, was to be the great jubilee. In the seventh year, the ground was to lie fallow; there was to be no toil, no sowing, no reaping; but enough was provided by God's special providence in the sixth year to last through the seventh, and to enable them to sow in the eighth, and yet to live upon the food that they had laid up in their granaries, and their store, in the previous years' preparation for it. Bush thus describes the sabbatical year:—

"The prominent circumstances which distinguished the sabbatical year from common years may be thus enumerated. (1.) All agricultural operations were

to be suspended, and the land was to lie fallow. The whole country must, in fact, have been thrown into one vast common, free to the poor and the stranger, to the domestic cattle and the game; for the proprietor of the land not only ceased to cultivate it, but had no exclusive right to its spontaneous produce, although he might share in it. (2.) The produce of every sixth year was promised to be such as would support them till the harvest of the ninth year; a circumstance which would clearly demonstrate a particular providence in respect to the institution. (3.) It was a season of release from debts due from one Israelite to another; but not those due from foreigners to Israelites. (4.) Every Hebrew slave had the option of being released this year from his servitude. At least this is often inferred from Ex. xxi. 2; but it will be seen by reference to the Note on that passage to be quite doubtful whether the seventh year there mentioned was not the seventh year of his actual service, rather than the sabbatical year. (5.) In the sabbatical year, at the feast of tabernacles, they were enjoined to read the law in the hearing of all the people. This was called by the Rabbinical writers ‘the reading of the king,’ because tradition made the king himself the reader on this occasion.

“It is not to be supposed that this year of rest to the land was necessarily spent by the Hebrews in idleness. They could fish, hunt, take care of their bees and flocks, repair their buildings and furniture, manufacture clothes, and carry on their usual traffic.”

Then the great jubilee year was to be the fiftieth year; and on the forty-ninth God was to give them

such increase that they should have enough for the fiftieth, and enough to last them through the fifty-first, while they were sowing in its spring time, to make ready for the fifty-second year. You will see at once, that here was a clear and unmistakable evidence, of which the senses must have taken cognizance, of the providential presence of God, repeated to the children of Israel every seventh year; the fruits of the sixth, bearing testimony to them of his presence, and proving the reality, not only of the existence, but the providential government, and faithful promises, of God. Then natural life was a miraculous one. In the fiftieth year the great trumpet was to sound, every slave was to be set free, every forfeited estate was to be restored, every one that had lost power was to be re-instated, if not in his former at least in suitable circumstances; an arrangement the end and drift of which, as we can easily see, was to prevent excessive accumulation of property in the few, and the excessive impoverishment of the multitude about them. It was a special dispensation for a great, ultimate, and glorious purpose; such arrangements were necessary to equalize and balance society in its infant state, and to prevent those terrible results which, if not anticipated or corrected in time, will in any country end in the most disastrous issues. Wrongs long unrighted generate, in the sense of a people's wrongs, those passions which result in a revolution. Now, to prevent anything of this kind, God laid down wise laws, which were the equipoise and balance of social life, and tended to prevent the discontent of the many, the selfishness of the few; and to put right in so many years whatever

had gone wrong in the social and political economy of that people. Bush gives the following description of the jubilee:—

“(1.) As in the sabbatical year, so in this, the people were neither to sow nor to reap, and the spontaneous products of the earth were to be accounted common property. Thus there were two years at every jubilee, when the Jews neither sowed nor reaped; namely, the jubilee and the year before, which was always a sabbatical year; and hence we see the reason why the promise of support, given in Lev. xxv. 20—22, was from the sixth till the harvest of the ninth year. We have only two passages of Scripture where this promise is alluded to, viz. 2 Kings xix. 29, and Isa. xxxvii. 30.

“(2.) The second thing remarkable in the year of jubilee was, that all the lands which had been sold by one Hebrew to another had a reference to this, being valued according to its proximity or remoteness, in order to their being restored in that year; or might be redeemed sooner by giving to the owner a proper compensation.

“(3.) All sales of houses in the country were returned likewise at that time, or could have been redeemed sooner; but all dwelling houses in walled cities, unless redeemed within a year, remained for ever with the possessor, except in the case of houses belonging to the Levites, which might have been redeemed at any time, although in walled cities; and if not redeemed, returned to them again as a matter of course in the year of jubilee.

“(4.) All Israelites who on account of poverty had sold themselves, that is to say their services, to Israel-

ites, were not to be reckoned as bond, but as hired servants, and were to return unto their families and fathers' possessions in the year of jubilee.

"(5.) All poor Israelites who on account of poverty had sold themselves to proselytes were to be accounted hired servants, and might be redeemed at any time by their relatives or themselves; but if not redeemed, were to obtain their liberty at the jubilee.

"(6.) As the Jewish kings had commonly much in their power, they were expressly forbidden, on the one hand, to seize the possession of any Israelite as a provision for their family, or on the other to squander the royal domains on favourites, as that would have lessened the patrimony of the crown; and if any such grants were at any time made, they reverted, of course, to the original proprietors in the year of jubilee.

"Such was the nature of the Jewish jubilee; but we do not find that any particular sacrifices were appointed, nor even that reading of the law which was enjoined in the sabbatical year; neither is it clear at what hour of the day of annual expiation the silver trumpets sounded to announce its commencement. It is probable, however, that it was in the evening, after the high priest had entered the most holy place, the scape-goat had been sent into the wilderness, and the people, in full concert in the temple, had been praising the Lord for his goodness, and because his mercy endureth for ever. Imagination may conceive, but it is beyond the power of language to describe, the general burst of joy that would pervade the land, when the poor Israelites tasted again the sweets of liberty, and returned to their possessions, their families, and friends. In vain would sleep invite them to

repose—their hearts would be too full to feel the lassitude of nature, and the night would be spent in gratitude and praise. What a lively emblem of the gospel of Christ, which is peculiarly addressed to the poor, which is fitted to heal the broken-hearted, to give deliverance to the captives, the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound, and to preach unto all the acceptable year of the Lord!"

But while all this was a special provision for the temporal comfort of the Jewish race, and is not a law obligatory upon us, the spirit of it cannot be too richly infused into the laws of every land, or too fully pervade the enactments of every community. There is much in the spirit and in the letter of Leviticus precious: you must notice, through the whole of this blessed book, that deep sympathy with the poor, that foresight of their wants, and provision for their ignorance; that beautiful precedent of lifting up the poor, and needy, and oppressed, and preventing their unrighteous sufferings, which has never been so fully exhibited in the history of modern nations. It is only where this spirit is most exhibited that society flourishes in its highest degree. Another point of view, however, in which we are to look at these institutions is, as the great type of what is yet to be. Our blessed Lord evidently applies it in this way, or rather the prophet applies it first, and then our Lord quotes it. In Isaiah lxi. we are told, "the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of

the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And you recollect in the Gospel of St. Luke, the fourth chapter, at the sixteenth verse, our blessed Lord "went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Now I do not believe that the great year of jubilee was then fulfilled. The sound of its approach was given, individual blessings preached by Christ, to such as received them made jubilees in individual hearts; till the fiftieth year, or rather the seventh millenary of the world, shall arrive, when what is now the possession, and privilege, and glory, of the few, shall be the privilege and the enjoyment and happy experience of all mankind. These rests of the earth were instalments and foretastes of her last rest; when all creation shall enjoy its everlasting sabbath; and its groans, its travail, and its expectancy shall cease; and the Prince of Peace shall reign from sea to sea, and all creation under His reign shall be blessed and made happy in him.

These recurring remedial provisions all indicate an abnormal condition of the earth at present, or a state of disaster, of barrenness, and disease ; but they nevertheless carry forward the hopes of the people of God to that pledged and promised day, when a greater jubilee than was ever heard amid the hills of Palestine shall reverberate over all the earth, and all slavery cease, and the forfeited inheritance, the lost world, paradise that has passed away, shall be restored again, and all nations bless the Redeemer, and be blessed in him ; that time so beautifully spoken of by the poet, when he says :—

“ One song employs all nations, and all cry,
Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us !
The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.
See Salem built, the labour of a God ;
Bright as the sun the sacred city shines.
All kingdoms, and all princes of the earth,
Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands
Flows into her ; unbounded is her joy ;
Praise is in all her gates ; upon her walls,
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts,
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there
Kneels, with the nations of the farthest west ;
And Ethiopia spreads abroad her hands,
And worships. From every clime they come,
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,
O Zion ! an assembly such as earth
Saw never—such as heaven stoops down to see !”

CHAPTER XXVI.

IDOLS FORBIDDEN. OBELISKS. PRIESTLY LITERATURE. BIBLE FOR ALL. CHRISTIANITY IS CATHOLIC. TEMPORAL BLESSINGS. NATIONAL GREATNESS. SECRET OF. THE JEW. THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE. THEIR RESTORATION.

I STATED in the commencement of my explanatory remarks upon the book on which our remarks are drawing to its close, that the whole of it occupied only a few days in its delivery, and that all these statutes were given, if not upon Mount Sinai—that is, upon its loftiest height or crag—yet in its immediate neighbourhood, and around it. Hence, the chapter closes with the statement, that “these are the statutes, and judgments, and laws, which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.” I can conceive nothing more eloquent and expressive, and at the same time, in some respects, touching, than the solemn statements that are contained in this chapter. First of all he inhibits the making of idols or representations of Deity, by which to pretend to worship him. No idol or graven image was to exist in Israel, even for the sake of ornament or beauty, lest the people’s tendency, ever in that direction, should worship the thing made, in the room of Him who made the heavens and the earth. But there is one allusion

here which indicates plainly the tendency of Israel to carry with them the habits they had imbibed in Egypt. Recollect, they had just come forth from the bondage of Egypt, very much imbued with its bad habits, needing line upon line to regulate and correct their conduct. And many of the customs of Egypt they took with them; and against these the laws in this book are specially and clearly levelled. One law here given is, "Neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land." Almost every commentator or critic I have consulted upon this text, believes that this is an allusion to the obelisks or pyramids, or rather obelisks, that are still to be found amid the *débris* of Egypt's ancient glory, and some specimens of which are in almost every museum in Europe. On these obelisks were hieroglyphic inscriptions; and, if this be an allusion to them, it is meant to teach Israel, not only that they were not to worship images, but, still more, that they were not to have a literature peculiar to one class of mankind that was not also to be known by all the rest. Recollect, in Egypt they had an isoteric and an esoteric literature; an isoteric literature known only to the priests, expressed by hieroglyphic characters, and kept from the people, because, as they thought, not fit for the multitude to know. I need not tell you that, by the discovery of the stone at Rosetta, and the hieroglyphic characters and the Greek inscription belonging to it; by Young, and Champollion, and others, the key to the hieroglyphic characters of the Nile has been discovered; and we now read that character and understand it nearly as truly as if it had been written in Hebrew, or Greek, or Latin, or any modern or

well-known tongue. But if this prohibition be an allusion to this, I know nothing more interesting than the denunciation of having a literature for one class that was not to be for the other, or having a religious knowledge for the highest class that was not to be known to the lowest; and if so, it therefore indirectly teaches us that there is not a blessing which we have in the knowledge of God and of divine things, that we are not bound to disseminate and spread, till the lowest and the humblest of mankind know it also. Our religion is not a religion for a class, it is not a religion for a *coterie*, it is not a religion for a sect; it is a religion essentially catholic, meant to beautify and bless the lowest masses, as well as the loftiest heights of society. We are here taught that our religion, and our faith, and our Bible, are to be spread wherever we have the means and the opportunities of spreading them; and that to try to lock them up in a dead tongue, or to say that there is anything that the priest or the minister may know that the people ought not to know, is a practice prohibited and forbidden in this blessed book.

He then tells them that “ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary;” and upon this ground, I, the proclaimer of it, the Object worshipped in the midst of it, am the Lord.

He then tells them that if they will walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments, and do them, then there is not a temporal blessing in the catalogue of the highest and the most providential mercies that he will not bestow upon them. It is true that this is not so now literally, and yet it is so substantially. The whole of this institution was what is now called a

theocracy. God was not only the God of the Jew, but he was also his King; and obedience to him, as God, brought down spiritual blessings; loyalty to him, as King, brought down temporal and national blessings. The theocracy has now ceased; but it is still true in the nineteenth century as it was in the days of Moses, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things will be added unto you." Now that is an absolute promise of universal application, and we ourselves shall feel it true in our actual experience if we will only put it to the test. Some do not seek the kingdom of God at all, but seek earthly things; often they miss the things that they seek, and, of course, miss what they never sought—God's favour; sometimes they are suffered in worse judgment to get the things that they seek, and they find them thorns and briars, and a curse, and no blessing. But if we seek first the kingdom of God, we shall not only get that, but the other things, temporal prosperity and temporal blessings, shall be added unto us, if they be most expedient for us.

We see here, in the next place, that temporal blessings are connected with obedience and allegiance to God. These temporal blessings—peace's victory over all their enemies, the fruitfulness of the land, the enjoyment of God's tabernacle in the midst of it—all are promised to obedience. This is still true of nations. Nations that are highest in Christian character will always be highest in every other national blessing. Just cast your eyes over the map of Europe; and if you had a thermometer, and could gauge the amount of living Christianity in each

nation, you will find that the nation in which Christianity is purest, rises highest, spreads the farthest, descends the deepest, is the very nation that is highest in all that dignifies, ennobles, and blesses a nation. And so, in our own native land, the victory of our armies in the righteous warfare to which it is committed, the maintenance of our land in peace and prosperity against all foe and all invasion, will rest, not only upon the banners of our brave troops, not only upon the gallantry of our heroic sailors, but far more upon the living religion that saturates the masses of our country. It is righteousness that exalteth a nation, and sin is the ruin of a nation. If you will read the history of nations, you will find this universally true ; no nation ever falls before a foreign foe—it always commits suicide. Nations die suicides ; they are self-slain. Rome fell only because of its inner corruption ; the beautiful sisterhood of Greek states fell by their universal depravity ; and our nation will never fall before a foreign foe as long as it is—what it is now in a greater degree than any other—a nation that fears God, and works righteousness, and counts the sunshine of His favour more precious than gold and silver, and whatsoever things may be weighed or bought.

Then He tells them that if, on the other hand, they will not obey his statutes and his commandments, that he will walk contrary to them, and will scatter them among all nations. I admit, at once, that this applies primarily to the Jews ; there is no doubt that the blessing and the curse here belong to the Jews ; and, while speaking of the blessing as applicable to ourselves, we must not omit to add that the curse is

applicable to us also. Many Gentile Christians act in a very unfair way ; they read the Old Testament, and pick out all its bright promises and blessings, and they say, "These are for us ;" then they read it again and pick out all its curses, and they fling these contemptuously and unmercifully to the Jews. Now that is not fair. If the Jew has the curse on him now, he has the blessing for him in bright reversion. The curse has fallen upon him ; his land is now the practical and visible transcript of those very curses that are here pronounced ; read Chateaubriand's account of his visit to it ; read any recent traveller ; read Keith's "Fulfilment of Prophecy ;" read Bishop Newton ; read Volney, the infidel, when he describes Palestine, if you want the most complete evidence of the fulfilment of every curse in this chapter. I will not ask the sceptic to read Dr. Keith's book, because he is a Christian, and scepticism quarrels with this ; but to read Volney's description of what he saw in Palestine, and he was an infidel ; and you will find it literally true that Volney, the infidel, unconsciously writes, "Thy word, O God, is truth." Every curse has been visited upon that land, and the Jew is the visible manifestation at this moment of the awful judgments that have been pronounced upon him. Look at the Jews in any land at this moment. How do you account for the Jews ? The Greek is gone ; the Albanian robber of the nineteenth century is no more like the Greek of the days of Pericles, than we are. The Roman is gone ; the modern Italian is not the ancient Roman. There is no one nation that retains its nationality complete, entire, but the Jew. And you must be aware, even in our land, of

the truth of this ; a nation without a country, a people without a home ; and bearing on his face the unmistakeable evidence of his origin ; and, also in his restlessness, the evidence that the curse pronounced still cleaves to him wherever he goes. You find the Jew by the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Ganges, the Thames, everywhere ; in all latitudes, speaking all tongues, with an ancestry in comparison of which the ancestry of our greatest nobles is but of yesterday, and with hopes that have a brilliancy equalled only by our own. How any man can be a disbeliever in the Bible with that deep-toned voice ringing in his ear every morning, I cannot well conceive ; or how anybody can read the Bible that predicts the destiny of the Jews, and yet refuse to believe it to be inspired, I cannot conceive. Yet the Jew is not forsaken ; he is cast down, but he is not cast off ; and it will not do for men in the present day to say, "God has cursed them, and therefore I curse them :" that is not right ; on the contrary, there is a blessing in this book upon those that bless Israel, and there is a curse upon those that curse him. We are not to set out to fulfil prophecy ; God will look after the fulfilment of his prophecies ; we are to obey precepts by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God. And, therefore, lest you should suppose that God has forsaken the Jews, he says, at the close of this very chapter, " Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them ; for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their

ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt." I am one of those, who may be mistaken, who believe that they are on the very verge of their restoration to their own great land ; a land still kept for them ; and that the great tumult which is now agitating and darkening the East, is the preparation of a way for an exodus to Palestine, brighter and more glorious than that recorded in the Book of Exodus.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MINUTE LAWS. DEVOTED THINGS. EXCHANGES. DEVOTED PERSONS. JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER. THE CONSIDERATION OF THE POOR. THE TITHE-SHEEP.

now arrive at the last chapter of a book, much of which has been fraught with moral, evangelical, and practical instruction. You can easily see that in this chapter Moses acts under the inspiration and the guidance of God, as the great law-maker and law-giver of Israel. The chapter is strictly and properly a summary of many of the laws, stating most minutely the coins, their values, and the estimation in which everything was held, and for which a vow might be exchanged. You cannot complain that these laws are excessively minute; for we all know that nothing can be more intricate—too intricate and minute—than the statute-book of our country, or the laws of the land, making them sometimes to appear perplexing; but all necessary for giving effect, precision, and distinction, to the various laws laid down for the regulation of mankind. Well, this chapter is full of minute regulations which were necessary in a day when an unenlightened race were the subjects of their action, and which are still necessary in our laws when more enlightened people are subjected to their influence. We know so well how the conscience can

persuade the heart, and how the heart can make a mere servant of the intellect; and construe things very plain, not in the direction of equity and truth, but in the direction of the favourite passion, the predominating preference, or the special personal interest that we have in view. It was, therefore, essential that these laws, which were to govern a people in the desert, should be so clearly, and distinctly, and minutely defined, that it could scarcely be possible for them to misconstrue them or to misinterpret them.

Now the first series of laws here laid down relates to what we have read—that persons might devote, or vow, or dedicate their sheep, or their oxen, or the product of their fields, or the fruits of their industry, to the Lord; that is, might give it for the maintenance of his temple, for the maintenance of his altars, or in any shape for religious purposes in the land of Canaan, and in the days of the sojourn in the desert. If a person having made a vow of an ox, or a sheep, or of the fruit of the field, or of any other thing which was capable of being vowed and dedicated to God, might wish to retain it, a law or provision is here made, that, instead of executing his vow by giving it in kind, he might give it in money; the shekel of the sanctuary being like the pound note, the standard figure in the ecclesiastical exchequer of Israel. We have, therefore, in this a provision for those who might wish not to give the precise thing that they had vowed; and they would naturally say, How much shall I give instead? They were not to be the judge; but the priest was the judge, and he could say, For so much you can recall your vow; and the judge himself was to decide, not according to

his own personal conviction, but according to the express law in the statute-book, of which he was the impartial and authorized interpreter, and according to which it was his bounden duty to act in deciding a question. Thus, then, the first ten verses are all a series of enactments providing for the revocation of a vow, and showing that by paying so much the vow was thereby substantially, if not *verbatim* and literally, fulfilled.

We read in the next place, that persons were not at liberty to vow the first-fruits of the field, or the firstlings of their flocks, for the plain reason that these were vowed already; God claimed them as his right, and these, therefore, they might not vow at all. Then, again, a person devoted a man—a father, a son, for instance, or a mother, a daughter—to the Lord; and in such a case it is said that one so devoted should be most holy. “None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed: but shall surely be put to death.” Now this expression, “shall surely be put to death,” is not strictly the rendering of the original, nor do I think there is the least foundation for the stress that has been laid upon it. It is literally rendered from the Hebrew, “shall dying die;” and the meaning is, that a person devoted in the way specified here, shall not be capable of having a compensation substituted for him or her, but shall remain a devoted person unto the day of his or her death. It is not, “shall be put to death;” and this shows that the interpretation sometimes put upon the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter, based in some degree upon this, is an unjust one. I do not believe that Jephthah’s daughter was put to death;

she was not killed, she was simply devoted till the day of her death, which occurred in the ordinary course of nature. That she was not killed is to me obvious from this: that, first, no sacrifice could be killed by any but a priest;—but Jephthah himself was a warrior, and not a priest, and he could not sacrifice a lamb, still less a human being;—and, in the second place, it was strictly forbidden in the law of Leviticus to sacrifice a human being. Human sacrifices were abhorrent to the law of God; and therefore God never could have justified Jephthah in offering that as a sacrifice which he had strictly forbidden in every part of his law. And thus the passage here, “shall surely be put to death,” when it is really looked at as it means, does not indicate that the devoted woman or the devoted man shall be put to death, but shall remain devoted until the hour of death. But you say, what is the distinction between the former part of the chapter, where we read of vows of creatures to God, and this latter part where it is another class devoted to the Lord? The vow was an ordinary expression, which might be very rashly uttered; but the devotion of an object was a solemn and a sacred calling down the judgment of God upon the individual if he did not fulfil it. It was a vow with a sort of oath superadded to it; and hence the original word for “devoted” in the twenty-eighth verse, is *cherem*, in Greek *anathema*. And it is very singular, that the institution which exists in Turkey, the *harem*, is a word borrowed from the Hebrew, through the Arabic, and it means strictly, certain persons that may be devoted—to good, or to bad, or to neutral, or to neither good nor bad purposes at all.

The word here for “devoted” is literally any one dedicated or devoted, for that is the simple meaning of the word. And I explained to you before, that the Hebrew word *kadosh*, for “holy,”—the same as the Latin word *sacer*, and the Greek word *ayios*,—does not mean necessarily holy, though we so translate it, but it simply means a person dedicated to a good or a bad use. Now this person thus devoted in this way, in this solemn manner, shall be incapable of being redeemed, but shall continue a devoted being until the day of death.

Then the thirty-second verse is explained by reference to a simple custom among the Jews concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock. And how very merciful, I may notice, does God show himself now, as in a previous part of the chapter—I ought to have alluded to it before; “If a man be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to his ability that vowed the priest shall value him.” It is most beautiful to see in all the ancient statutes of Israel, how the poor are emphatically cared for. It is not the rich and the great that are most cared for, but the poor, the humble, and the lowly. The provision here made is a very wise one; the tenth of the flock shall be holy unto the Lord. And the way to know the tenth of the flock, is not for the tithe-collector to rush into the fold and pick out the best sheep or the choicest of the flock; but all the flock are to be placed within a pen; a narrow gate is to be opened, the sheep are to go out from this; when one goes out you know the rest easily follow; and then a person stands by—this was the Hebrew

custom—with a rod, and on the end of the rod red-ochre, or some other colouring substance; and whenever a tenth sheep came, he struck it on the back with this rod, and that left a mark upon it; and then the merciful provision is, that the sheep so marked shall be the tithe of the flock, whether that sheep be young or old, whether it be good or bad: the beautiful impartiality, as well as the tenderness and mercy of God running through the whole of this book, and showing that the world is not so much in advance of Leviticus as the world in its vanity sometimes thinks; but that many an addition to our statute-book might be taken from what the sceptic would call, these obsolete and antiquated laws.

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COMPANION

SABBATH MORNING READINGS.

THE GREAT SACRIFICE.

P R E F A C E.

THIS is not so much another and independent work, as the complement of one actually in progress. The Sermons it contains were preached in connexion with the Expositions on Leviticus, and are likely to cast a little additional light on a very difficult, but precious part of the Sacred Volume.

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THE GREAT SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONTRAST.

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh : how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?"

HEBREWS ix. 13, 14.

have seen in the first chapter of Leviticus, which we have this morning read, the letter of the Gospel. In the verses that we have now read, we have what may be called the spirit of the Gospel. The one is the outward and material hieroglyph, the other is the inward and the spiritual meaning. The one, or the letter, the worship on this mount, with all its forms, its ceremonies, its sacrifices ; the other is neither on this mount, nor on that, but the requirement that they who are in Christ worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The one was the washing with water, the purifying of the outward man ; the other is the washing of the spirit, the renewing of the inward heart. Leviticus, in the letter, could make a Jew outwardly ; the New Testament can

make a Jew inwardly, whose praise is not of man, but of God : but in both, as I have stated, we have the same Gospel. Moses and Matthew equally sketched from a grand original ; they equally described the Lord of glory, the Sacrifice for sin, the Saviour of the guilty, only in different shades and colours : in the case of Moses with more splendid colours, in more gorgeous hues; in the case of Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, more fully, and simply, and transparently, but still the same Saviour. Moses and Matthew spoke the same truths ;—the one with stammering lips, the other clearly : the one upon the lower ; the other upon the loftier, and the clearer key-note. They lived in the same light ; but Moses saw Christ by moonlight,—a veil of dark cloud all round him and over him : the other saw Christ in the sunlight,—the clouds that are about him only softening, not concealing the splendour of his glory. But both looked to the same Saviour,—trusted in the same cross ; the one in the world's infancy, the other when light and immortality have been clearly brought to light. The fact is, there never has been, from the moment that Christ was preached in Paradise till now, but one Protestant and evangelical religion. It has been from the beginning. Adam, Abel, and Enoch, were Christians before the flood ; Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, were Christians, amid their shining tents in the desert ; Moses, and David, and Hezekiah, were Christians, amid the projected shadows of Sinai and of Horeb ; Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Peter and Paul, were Christians, who had seen Christ —the same Christ—face to face ; Augustine, and Chrysostom, and Vigilantius, were Christians in the patristic era, in the early dawn ; and Cecil and

Howell, and innumerable others, familiar to us personally, or familiar from their excellence and the life they have left behind them, are Christians now, upon whom the ends of the world have come. But salvation by grace, through faith in the only Sacrifice, ever was, now is, and always will be, the only mode of acceptance before God.

It may be asked by some, Why this progression in God's revealing of himself ? Why did he not unfold at once, in Eden, the institution of his mercy and his love—the Gospel in all its fulness ? It is one of the “why's” that a fool can ask, and the wisest man can scarcely answer: but, while we cannot solve it, we may in a manner vindicate it by asking, Why, if there be a God of goodness and of love, has he been pleased not to reveal earlier some of the most beneficent and useful discoveries of the age in which we now live ? We can see progress in civilization, in literature, in science, in political knowledge. May not all this be to teach us, that progress in God's revealing of himself is only part and parcel of the great plan that he carries out in his own infinite wisdom, in his preparation of mankind for a better, a happier, and a nobler state ? But we can see reasons in it that no one can possibly fail to admit the value of: we can see in this progress a constant teaching—a continuous impression. The human mind is less impressed by sudden light than by the gradual and persistent influence of a continuous one. Those truths that we search out for ourselves we recollect and feel more than those that are shortly and simply told us. It seems a law in our economy, that anything that we have been long drilled and initiated in, and made conversant with,

comes to be part and parcel of the influential principles that direct, and guide, and shape the whole life. Besides, we may not yet be able to answer these questions, because we do not see all God's ultimate designs. We see but a part of God's great economy; and it is very presumptuous in us to pronounce upon the whole, while we are admitted only to witness a part. When you read the preface of a book, you would not dream of pronouncing upon the merits of the whole from a perusal of the preface. When you see the foundation of a building, you would not think of pronouncing upon the excellence or the beauty of the edifice, either from a brick selected from the whole, or from seeing the foundation of it laid. And perhaps we may learn, in after ages, to feel some sense of shame that we cavilled where we ought to have had confidence; that we doubted where we ought to have been humble in our ignorance, and waited till the God that gave the mysteries was pleased to make them plain.

The Christian church never, from Paradise till now, was without a sacrifice to make, or a sacrament to receive. For four thousand years before Christ sacrifices were offered up day by day, in order to carry forward the hearts of the offerers to Christ, the only and the atoning Sacrifice. For two thousand years after sacraments have been celebrated in the Christian church, pointing the faith of the celebrants backward still to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. The sacrifices before Christ came, preached Christ to come; the sacraments since Christ came, preach Christ who has come: but the centre and the object of both was Christ, and both destitute of in-

herent virtue, and precious only as preaching simply Him who is all our salvation and all our desire.

Faith in Christ, as the only atonement, was equally requisite in him who brought his victim of old, and in him who now does this in remembrance of him. It was not the sacrifices that Moses offered that saved Moses; but the one Great Sacrifice to come, in whom Moses believed. It is not the sacrament that we celebrate, that either regenerates us or justifies us; but the Christ who appointed those sacraments in order to commemorate him. It was not the offering of his lamb that saved Moses, but faith in Christ, the Lamb of God. It is not coming to the Lord's Supper that does of itself any good to us, but faith in him who appointed that institution, rite, and sacrament, in order to commemorate him. We see that whether it was under Levi or under Matthew, whether it was in the economy that has passed away or in the economy that still is, it was still personal communion with God, the exercise of personal faith in Christ that saved the sinner, and not the sacrifice he offered, or the sacrament he celebrates, or the rite, however beautiful, in which he engages. Thus, personal apprehension, or trust—not ecclesiastical, not corporate, but personal trust—with the heart and conscience in Christ, the Saviour of sinners, ever was, now is, and ever will be, salvation to the chiefest of sinners.

Let us now ask, Who appointed these sacrifices? You must have noticed to-day, as we read the chapter, that they were not first instituted in Leviticus, but regulated there. God does not there appoint the sacrifices, but he assumes the offering of the sacrifices as a habit that always had been. Just as in the desert, the

Sabbath was not then instituted; their memories were simply refreshed by the recapitulation of it. So these sacrifices were not instituted by Moses in Leviticus, but they were regulated and made subservient to the great purpose for which God designed them. What is the origin of sacrifices—whence did they originate? It is not, I think, possible, that if man had been left to himself, he could have for a moment supposed that the sanguinary and bloody rites in the Tabernacle, making its courts almost like slaughter-houses, without any great lesson that it inculcated, could have been acceptable to God. Man's finest feelings would revolt from taking away the life of an innocent and inoffensive lamb, incapable of injury, and by its very nature unstained by any sin. It is impossible to believe that he could take, of his own spontaneous choice, such an animal, and suppose that his shedding its blood, burning it upon an altar, and letting it ascend in smoke and flame to God,—that this destruction of a part of God's most beautiful workmanship, could by any possibility atone for a moral transgression, committed by him who should slay the animal and offer it up to God. It does seem that man, as man is, if left to himself, would have selected the fairest and the most fragrant flowers, least blighted by the taint of sin, that grew in the lingering sunshine, and under the shelter of the walls of Paradise, and have woven them into a beautiful garland, and laid them upon the altar of God, and have asked God to accept these as the offerings of his heart. But we are not left to guess. Cain, from the instincts of his nature, did so, and he was rejected: Abel offered an offering of a totally different description, and was accepted. We

have, therefore, positive proof that sacrifices were not of human but of divine origin. We find man, after his sin, and before he was taught the gospel, conscious that there was in him some great want, some terrible change; and dreaming in his ignorance that the fever that he felt without was all, and not the sin that touched the conscience within, took fig-tree leaves, made himself a beautiful raiment from one of the trees of the garden, and thought that thus he could right himself, and would be beautiful before God as he was in the days of his pristine innocence. But God did not suffer this; he clothed Adam and Eve in the skins of slain animals. For what purpose were these animals slain? We find that animal food was not allowed till the days of Noah; for two thousand years flesh was not eaten as part of the food of man. It is therefore certain that the skins with which Adam and Eve were clothed were the skins of animals slain in sacrifice. The instant Adam sinned, that instant the want of the Great Sacrifice was felt in Paradise. Cain offers up beautiful flowers and delicious fruits, as expressive of his allegiance to God, and the fruits and the flowers are blasted, and the offerer is branded: Abel takes of the firstlings of his flock, offers up a lamb, sheds its blood; the offering is accepted, and the offerer is praised. We have, therefore, express divine sanction, that sacrifices were of divine origin. Job offered up a whole burnt-offering in case sin should cleave to his sons; Abraham, wherever he struck his tent, there had his altar built; and we find, in the Levitical economy, sacrifices expressly authorized, commanded, and approved by God. We are thus certain that sacrifices are of divine origin. Where

too did the most barbarous tribes in the backwoods and deserts of the world get the sacrifices that they offer ? I am satisfied it is the remains of tradition. Tradition has wafted on its wings certain primal and aboriginal truths ; and the most distant tribes prove, by their practice, their origin to have been where Ararat stood ; and the remains of the religion that they practise to be distorted fragments of the revelation of God himself.

If these sacrifices were of Divine origin, what was their object—why were they instituted ? Was it a mere arbitrary selection, or was there special fitness in the sacrifices for the special purpose that God had in view ? What was their object—what their end ? We can answer some of these questions from that infallible commentary upon Leviticus—the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. No sacrifices offered by Aaron and his sons were ever regarded as substitutes for, or as superseding, moral duties and obligations. The same God that appointed the sacrifices to lead to the knowledge of forgiveness, appointed the Decalogue, and forbade its violation. It is not true, therefore, that the atonement offered in the Tabernacle or the Temple superseded the moral obligation of compliance with God's holy law. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil ? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?" No ! "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of

thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" No sacrifices that man could offer could ever be a substitution for that.

These Jewish sacrifices did not atone of themselves. There was no more expiatory virtue in the Levitical sacrifice of a lamb than there is in the sacraments that we celebrate. There is no proportion between them. How can we suppose that the blood of a dumb brute can possibly cancel the transgressions of a responsible and immortal soul? There is no proportion between them; and to suppose that any Israelite had his sins forgiven, really and fully, through the blood of the sacrifice he offered, is to misunderstand the whole of the Levitical economy; for, says the apostle himself, if these sacrifices could have taken away sin, they would have ceased to be offered; because the worshipper, once pardoned, would have had no more consciousness of sin. But the fact that they were constantly offered, shows that they could not take away sin; because if they had taken away sin they would have ceased to be offered, as having done their work, and nothing more being left for them to do. But the very fact that they were ceaselessly and continuously offered proves that they could not take away sin. Hence David, when he rose to the highest pitch of evangelical experience, and writing after his sin, in Psalm li., says, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering." Now, if these had been atoning, or expiatory, they would have been the very things that God would have delighted in, that God would have desired, and that David would really need. But David looked beyond these, and saw Him who was the

Antitype, the object, and the end of these; and he, therefore, prayed that God would hide his face from his sins, and blot out all his iniquities. I admit there were subordinate ends in all these sacrifices; but, beyond all these, and beyond all doubt, the great end of all Leviticus—its pervading aim, its object, its meaning—was, to teach Christianity, which is one word for Christ crucified. What is Christ crucified? Christianity. What is Christianity? Just Christ crucified. The lustre of the victims of Levi was borrowed from the Cross: their significance, their interpretation, is found in the Cross of Christ. Christ was not adapted to them, as the popular mind often supposes, but they were pre-adapted to set forth Christ. He was the archetypal victim—they were shadows only to signify Him. The proof of this is plain. These sacrifices began in Paradise the moment that Christ was declared; and they ceased on Calvary the moment that Christ died. They were buried with Christ in his grave—only Christ rose, and all the sacrifices of Levi remain behind.

How conclusive is the evidence in all this that these sacrifices were not atonements, nor expiations—but voices crying in the wilderness, “We are not that Lamb; we are only here to help you to see that Lamb; and to lean, not upon us, that cannot save you; but upon the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.” And justly do we conclude, that if anything besides this were the object of the Levitical economy, it would be altogether unworthy of God. If there be not meaning and mystery wrapt up in these strange hieroglyphs, with their meaning and mystery explained in Christ and in the New

Testament, I never could suppose that the God that gave that magnificent and sublime expression of his will on Sinai—the Decalogue—ever could have descended to tell you how to kill sheep, to shed their blood, upon what side of the altar they should be slain, and what robes the priest should wear when he slew them. The contrast between the two is so great that you cannot suppose that the God who gave the Decalogue inspired Leviticus, if Leviticus be an ultimate and a closing thing. The fact is,—regard Leviticus as an ultimate ritual, its prescriptions as stereotypes, and I could not accept it as inspired: but rend the veil; let the light of the New Testament fall upon the Old; let the glory that shone on Mount Tabor in the transfiguration light upon Moses, as he treads the desert, and builds the Tabernacle, and names the sacrifices,—and I can see in every sacrifice the footprint of Christ, in every utterance the Gospel of Christ, and in all Christ crucified—which is, Christianity. No one, therefore, should read the Old Testament without the New, nor the New without the Old. Read commentaries and explanations of both, by all means; but read Leviticus, especially, in the light of the Epistle to the Hebrews. I do not know what we should have done without that magnificent commentary upon Leviticus—the Epistle to the Hebrews: it is the key to it, it explains it, and puts it in its true light, and shows its significance and its meaning most strikingly and beautifully.

Having reached these conclusions, let me notice that these Levitical sacrifices were always regarded as fit for food. And I may mention, that while there was mainly and chiefly great spiritual ends, you will find

in Leviticus laws for food, for clothing, and for social life, that we, of this nineteenth century, are only beginning at this moment to learn. Why, what do you find amongst the Jews now? They are not certainly the cleanest or the most particular people in their habits; and yet, because they ritually observe certain laws, you find them generally exempt from pestilence; by their law they are obliged at certain times to clean their house, and to clean it thoroughly—not only those parts which are seen, but every nook and corner of it. And what is the consequence? That the Jews, by the use of those means that God in his providence has provided, are generally exempt from those fevers, and pestilences, and other diseases, to which Gentiles are more subject. And there are in the Old Testament, in addition to its great moral laws, certain regulations for social life and instructions with reference to it, that make this nineteenth century in which we live look savage and barbarous, in comparison of the habits of these uninstructed, illiterate, and unæsthetic Jews, living nearly two thousand years before Christ came into the world.

These animals that were offered in sacrifice were always fit for human food. This law is not, I believe, morally binding now; the animal that re-chewed its food, and whose hoof was divided into two parts, was alone fit for human food to a Jew, and also for sacrifice on his altar. For instance, the pig was not allowed to be eaten by the Jew—it was accounted unclean. So, in the same manner, the dog, the horse, with the wild beasts—necessarily unclean—were not allowed to be eaten by the Jews. And you will find, now, that your health is very much connected

with the observance of these great laws; and, it may turn out, on riper investigation, that these laws, while they seemed to have reference only to religious rites, were connected with the social and physical well-being of the race of which we form a part. The animals chosen for sacrifice were strictly to be what were called "clean animals." This was intended to indicate that as the Jew could only eat the clean animals, so it was only the clean animals that were offered in sacrifice. Perhaps it meant, too, that just as what we eat is incorporated into our frame, and becomes part and parcel of our bodies, so the Jew's interest in his sacrifices should be something closer than sight,—something more intimate than mere presence. It should be true of him and of us, "We live; yet not we, but Christ liveth in us." "My flesh is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed,"—that is, we should be so completely his that we are members of his body—our happiness, our peace, our strength, our prospects, not ours, but Christ's; and ours because Christ's, and received through him.

In the second place, the sacrifices were required to be very valuable. If a man was very rich, according to his wealth he was to give his offering; if he was poor, he was to give that which he could afford;—and the poor woman that brought her turtle doves as a sacrifice, was as acceptable in the sight of God, as the rich man that brought his ox. But the rich man was not to say, Therefore I will bring pigeons as a sacrifice; but each, according to his ability, was to offer that which became him. And in these sacrifices, too, there may have been certain types and symbols

that were no doubt of value. The patient ox, the meek lamb, the gentle dove, may have been prefigurations of the Lord Jesus Christ; but the great idea that they inculcated—line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little, there a little—was the idea of atonement. The great truth with which the Jew was indoctrinated in all his sacrifices, was this—that without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. The great idea that God designed to impress upon the minds of the offerers, was this—that pardon of sin and sacrifice were in some shape inseparable, and that without a victim's death there never could be the sinner's forgiveness. Now, a great thought impressed upon a people, and constantly elucidated, ends in great acts. You very rarely find that a truth introduced into the human mind is altogether without fruit in the human life; and, in order fully to develop and render clear this idea, you will observe that the priest laid his hand upon the victim's head, and confessed the sins of the people. Thus, every Jew was taught the idea of transference of sin—transferring the similitude of his sin to the creature slain, and his going free because that creature was slain. The idea of a sin-bearer, as well as a sin-sacrifice, was thus made constantly familiar to the Jew. And then the lesson still lasts for us. How beautifully does that express what has been done by Christ! The Jew came, laid his hand upon the head of the victim, and confessed his sins over it; the victim was slain, utterly consumed before God. The Christian lays not his literal hand upon a literal victim, but he lays the trust of his soul upon an unseen, but not an unknown, Christ; and thus reposing the hand of his heart, the confidence of

his soul, upon Him on whom were laid the iniquities of us all, for his name's sake we are justified, acquitted, and accepted of God. And hence, whenever the apostles designed to teach that great truth which the Socinian so ignorantly denies—that Christ's death was an atonement, they could not have used language that more distinctly or emphatically describes it. I say, if you want to teach it, I defy you to employ language that more clearly, distinctly, and emphatically inculcates the expiatory character of Christ's death than that which the apostles employ. And when they did so, the Jews, accustomed for four thousand years to sacrificial rites, and the Gentiles, still retaining, from tradition, some distorted remains of primeval sacrifice, were both prepared to understand them. And thus Christ, regarded as an atonement, was not the objectionable thought to the Gentile. There is no evidence that the Gentiles objected strongly to the idea of Christ's death being atoning; what they could not believe was that he had risen from the dead;—and the Jews had no doubt of the meaning of Christ's death being atoning; their only doubt was, whether Christ was the Messiah promised to the fathers. But the apostle argues with great force in this chapter on the superiority of Christ's sacrifice to all these; for, he argues, with unconquerable logic,—If these, the sacrifices of Levi, "sanctified,"—that is, made outwardly clean, "to the purifying of the flesh;" that is, translated into Levitical language, if the Jew was ceremonially clean, admissible into his temple, entitled to a place in his nation, having a right to all the privileges that belonged to the Jew in the literal Canaan—how much more will the Christian, the true

Jew, be admitted to all the privileges of the Christian economy, and to the everlasting Canaan, the true rest that remains for all the people of God! The Levitical sacrifices gave outward cleanness, outward rights, outward privileges, outward hopes; Christ's sacrifice gives inward character, inward peace, inward joy, inward hope; and, if these outward sacrifices gave all these national privileges to that people, how much more shall the sacrifice of Christ give pardon, peace, joy, to all mankind, that are taught by his blessed Spirit to rest on him, and to accept his sacrifice as their only title to heaven!

There is something in this most comprehensive—the “How much more!” is inexhaustible in its meaning. If the Jew got so much by his sacrifices, what language shall express, what words shall paint, the blessings that shall flow to the worst of sinners through faith in the death and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The apostle says, “Christ through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God.” You have here proof of the doctrine of the Trinity—Christ, the offerer; the Spirit, through whom he offered; and God the Father, to whom he offered. And thus, when we are baptized, we are baptized in the name of Christ, that offered the sacrifice; in the name of the Spirit, through whom he offered it; and in the name of the Father, to whom he offered it. And when we are blessed, sacrifice is still interwoven with it. We are blessed in the name of the Father, to whom he offered it; in the name of Christ, by whom the offering was made; and in the name of the Spirit, through whom the offering was made. There is found in the baptismal name, there

is found in the daily blessing, the idea of sacrifice and sin forgiveness. It runs through the whole Christian economy ; giving it all its colouring, its shape, its light, and its life.

Christ himself was the priest. He, it is said, offered for us. And what a blessed thought it is that we need no priests in the Christian economy now, because there is nothing for them to do. Christ offered himself—an Infinite Offerer, presenting an infinite sacrifice : if not sufficient, nothing can be ; and if sufficient, what is the use of priests ? Mark the distinction : Christian ministers are called ambassadors, but never priests officially. Now what is the difference between the two ? A priest is a man that holds a position before God ; an ambassador that puts God's will clearly and plainly before us. The priest ascends from the sinner to God, making reconciliation ; the ambassador comes from God down to the sinner, proclaiming reconciliation. Therefore, to admit a Christian minister to be a sacrificing priest, is simply to be guilty of utter apostasy from all that is distinctive of and peculiar to that religion where we have not a sacrifice to make us priests between man and God ; but a sacrifice to proclaim from God—God reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses.

And as Christ was the Priest, so we read, in the next place, he was the Sacrifice. All the sacrifices then perished. His words, "It is finished!" rung the death-knell of them all. Aaron, and Levi, and Moses, and all the priests of the Tabernacle, stood around Calvary when Christ died, and when he said, "It is finished!" they added, "Amen ! Our work is

done ; the Great Workman is here ; our sacrifices are finished, the True Sacrifice has come. There is nothing more for us to do ; the transient is merged in the eternal, the provisional is merged in the perfect ; Christ is come ; and he hath offered one sacrifice for sin, once for all. No other is possible ; no other is needed. Instead of thinking of others, let us rest more intensely upon this once for all, for the sins of all that believe."

And what a truth is here ! Deity, the altar ; Jesus—God-man—the priest ; his humanity, the victim. The altar was not the cross, but the Godhead ; the priest was not man, but Christ himself : and the victim was his own spotless self, without spot, without blemish, —his own holy and perfect humanity. What a grand truth is this, my dear friends ; how instructive to us, that our religion is built upon that in which a Triune Jehovah was concerned ; and if we rest here, nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. He offered himself by the Spirit. You will find from Christ's conception to the close of his life constant allusions to the Spirit taking a part ; but the very fact that He offered himself—no man living can offer himself a sacrifice ; no man living has a right to do it ; he may commit suicide, or he may commit murder, but he cannot offer himself,—the fact that Jesus offered himself, is the best possible evidence that Jesus was God.

The great truth which the apostle draws from this is, that he might "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The great truth is, that the very first effect of the atonement is to be the extinction of that which is the fever of

the conscience—remorse ; and the introduction of that which is the healing of the conscience—the peace which passeth understanding ; the purifying of the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. Insensibility may exist in men who, by constant excitement of the world, keep down thought ; but wherever there is a thinking man, with the knowledge of the New Testament and the Saviour, there must be, at the recollection of sin, remorse. And there is no feeling, I believe, so terrible as remorse. I can conceive no agony more terrible than that. The poet, though not a Christian, describes it when he says,

“ The man that broods o'er sinful deeds
Is like a scorpion girt with fire,
In circles narrowing as it glows,
The flames around the captive close ;
So does the guilty soul expire,
Like to the scorpion girt with fire.
So writhes the mind remorse has riven
Unfit for earth, undoom'd to heaven ;
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death.”

Such is remorse in its intensest form ; and everyone has some knowledge what it is, though he never has had any experience of its terrible intensity. Then how is the conscience purged from this ? If I address a sinner in this assembly, who has the feeling of remorse at the recollection of sin, how does this atonement take it away ? Not by destroying conscience. Peter's conscience was more sensitive after forgiveness than it was before. Not, in the second place, by destroying the recollection of sin. You cannot forget a sin ; if done, it cannot be cancelled, and ever after

you must recollect it. In heaven they may recollect sin on earth; and praise Him only the more who graciously forgave it. It is not, in the next place, by showing sin itself in a different aspect to man after he is converted. Then how is it? Not by your forgetting sin; not by the conscience becoming dead to sin; not by sin itself being changed in its essential character; but by this—that you see in that Atonement in which you trust that everything that sin did is completely destroyed, that every ruin that sin made is rebuilt. Was the law broken? The atonement has magnified it. Was God dishonoured? Through Christ he is glorified. Are you separated from God? By the atonement you are united to him. Are you strangers and aliens by nature? By this atonement you are brought near to him. And your own minds can see that the process of redemption so completely covers the wreck or havoc that sin has made, that you repose in perfect confidence upon it; and the peace that passeth understanding becomes your possession; so that justified by faith we have peace with God—not because we forget sin, not because sin is not sin, not because conscience is dead, but because we lay our hands upon the head of the spotless Lamb, and are sure—sure as we are that we do so—that all the curse, the condemnation, the misery of sin, is put away, and so there is sunshine for cloud, and peace for trouble, and hope where there was none before.

CHAPTER II.

CONFESSiON THROUGH SACRiFICE.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1 JOHN i. 8, 9.

You will see at once the allusion of the text to some of those rites about which we have been reading in the fifth chapter of the Book of Leviticus. I stated, at the close of my short exposition of the chapter, that confession seems always to have accompanied the sacrificial offerings of the Jews; confession referring to sacrifice, the sacrifice giving to that confession all its virtue and vitality. We shall find instances scattered throughout the whole Scripture of what confession is—how full, how free, how truly the expression of the inmost sentiments of the heart—not only in the New, but in the Old Testament also. We have a very beautiful definition of it in these words, in 1 Kings viii. 47: "Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their

soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name ; then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee.” We have an instance of it equally beautiful in the prophet Daniel, where we read that Daniel confessed in some such terms as these :—“I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession,”—confession always suggestive of sacrifice to a Jew’s mind, and never detached or dissociated from it,—“and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments ; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments ; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day ; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass, that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.” You

have, therefore, in the first prescription from the Book of Kings, what is to be the nature of the confession; and, in this instance, of prayer by Daniel himself, a specimen of true, fervid supplication and confession at the footstool of the Almighty. In the Psalms of David, every psalm alternates confession and thanksgiving.

Let us inquire and try to ascertain what are some of the characteristics of true confession of sin. He that has never confessed his sins to God knows nothing of what the very first requirement or instinctive suggestion of Christianity is. If we have never confessed to God when no ear could hear but his, we have never yet sought truly, earnestly, and fervently, the forgiveness of our sins; and if we have never sought it, we have it not; and if we have it not, it is not because we are poor, or ignorant, or unable, but wholly because we are unwilling humbly to confess our sins, and to seek mercy and forgiveness from God.

Now, as far as I can judge from all instances of confession recorded in the Word of God, we shall find that wherever there was genuine confession of sin, whether it was personal and private, or congregational and public, it was always freely felt and freely expressed. It was not something wrung from the party confessing as a sort of sacrifice, or a sort of ordinance; but it was the free, the full, the spontaneous pouring out of the inmost and deepest compunctions of the soul in earnest prayer and communion with God. Pharaoh, when he felt the judgments of God upon him, confessed his sins only to return to his sins again. When Balaam, the wicked

and the false prophet, saw the angel, he confessed his sin, but it was not true confession. Judas, when he flung away the price of blood, confessed his sin—“I have betrayed innocent blood!” But these criminals confessed their sins just in some such way as sailors in a storm fling their cargo overboard, their hearts almost going after it — obliged to do it in the hope of saving the ship, but willing rather to retain it if they could save their lives while they did so. Pharaoh, and Judas, and Balaam, were ready to get rid of the sins that were conducting down upon their heads the judgments of God, not that they liked the sins less, but that they feared the judgments which those sins were precipitating upon them. This is not true, or Christian, confession of sin.

Wherever there is true confession, it will be full. It will not be the confession of the sin that lies heaviest on the conscience only, nor confession of the sins last recollected ; but the confession of all sin. It will be taking all the shame and the guilt of sin to yourself. Till Adam became a Christian, his confession was not Christian confession. When his sin was brought to his conscience first, he said, “The woman that thou gavest me, she gave me, and I did eat.” He distributed the blame between God and Eve; and, as for himself, he was as innocent as a lamb. “The woman that thou gavest me,”—why did you give her to me? “The *woman* that thou gavest to me, she gave me, and I did eat.” And then Eve, showing how human nature had suddenly become depraved, when she was spoken to said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat;” but, as for me, I am perfectly innocent. Why did you make the serpent?

Why did you suffer him to come here? There can be no guilt in me; I am thus perfectly innocent. But when they were brought to see themselves in the right light, and to see the woman's seed that should bruise the serpent's head, they learned with Abel, their second son, to confess their sins freely, as well as fully, and to seek forgiveness only through the blood of sprinkling. So Judas, when he confessed, confessed the sin that was last perpetrated, and the worst—his betrayal of innocent blood; but he did not confess the previous covetousness that led to it. A Christian's confession of his sins to God is full; he not only confesses outward acts, but inward feelings. And that man who, when God alone hears, can unveil to God sins that nobody else can see, and shortcomings that nobody else dreams of, and seeks forgiveness for those sins that are hidden from the world, as well as for those that the world takes cognizance of—the man, in short, who can say from his very heart, "O God, cleanse me from secret sins!" gives the strongest evidence that his confession is accompanied with forgiveness from the only Atonement from which forgiveness comes.

In the next place, true confession of sins, such as is indicated here, must be not only free, not only full, but sincere and unfeigned. You may repeat the most beautiful liturgy that ever was composed, and yet not confess one single sin. You may use words the most expressive of true contrition, and yet there may not be the faintest contrition in your heart. Your lips may be most eloquent, your heart may be wholly dumb. Now God does not listen to what a man says, but to what a man's heart beats. God

regards not outward devotion only, but the heart, whether it be devotional or not. Many a person prays who does not say many prayers ; and many a person says many prayers who never prays at all. What God looks to, therefore, as the organ of true confession is, the heart,—without the voice if you like, but never the voice without the heart. Both, if you can ; but if one must be absent, let it be the voice, not the heart.

Confession must be to God, and to God alone. Fallen and degraded as man is, he degrades himself below the pitch to which sin has brought him, when he kneels down before a priest, so called, and confesses in his ear the secret thoughts, and imaginations, and sins of his heart. That is deep and thorough degradation. God never degrades the sinner, though He will always humble him : but such confession as that is not humbling, it is degradation. And I may here, without entering into controversy, just notice the text, very often quoted for it :—“ Confess your faults one to another.” There is a note in the Roman Catholic Bible below this text, which says, “ Confess your faults one to another,”—that is, “ Confess your sins to the priests.” That is a very extraordinary inference,—“ Confess your sins one to another—that is, confess your sins to the priests !” And very justly did a poor Irish convert, under that noble movement—the Irish Church Missions, say, “ Here is the advantage of notes to our Catholic Bible ; for how should we have found out that we ought to confess to the priest, if it had not been for this note below the text in St. James,—‘ Confess your sins one to another ; that is, to the priests ?’ We

never could have discovered it except for that ‘note.’” But that note is not the interpretation of the text, but the obscuration and distorting of the text. The text is, “Confess your faults one to another;” and as to the whole system of confession based upon it, there is here its utter disproof. “Is any sick among you?” What is he to do? Let him call for the priests of the church? No! no such officer is known in the Bible; but let him call for the “elders” of the church; and then, when he calls for them, what are they to do? Hear his confession and absolve him? No! nothing of the kind—let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him. Nothing is here about absolution. And then, if he hath committed sins, not the elders of the church shall forgive them; but they, the sins, shall be forgiven him. And then, confess your faults, not to a priest, but confess your faults “one to another.” If I have said a word to you that has given you offence, it is my duty to confess it, and your duty to forgive it; and if you have said a word against me, it is your duty to confess, and my privilege to forgive. But here is a distinction which I wish you to notice. A sin has two aspects. If I should steal a sovereign from a fellow-sinner, my friend, that act would have two aspects; one aspect would be the injury it does to my brother—the other aspect would be the sin in its rebound that I commit against God. Now, as far as it is injury done to my brother, he ought to forgive it, and he can forgive it, and do it better than the priest can, because the priest has nothing to do with it; it was not committed against him, but against my brother: but, as far as it is sin committed against God, and only

against him, God alone can forgive it, and to God alone, therefore, I confess it. The fault—the injury—that I have committed against another, that other forgives; but the sin that is in it, which shoots from the earth and strikes against heaven, God, against whom it is committed, alone can forgive. Hence David said—what we sung or prayed this morning—“Against thee, thee only have I sinned,”—that means, I have injured Uriah, but I have sinned against thee. Therefore he seeks forgiveness, not from the priest, but from God—“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.”

Let me allude to another characteristic of all true and genuine confession. All confession of sin is specific. While there is a general confession fitted for the general congregation, there is the specific confession, peculiar to individuals. Hence, in some of the most memorable instances in the Old Testament, we find the specific sin added to the general. Thus in Judges x. 10, “we have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim”—the specific sin added. So the Israelites confessed that “we have committed sin; we have added unto our sins this,” namely, “that we have asked us a king.” Added to their general confession was the specific sin that lay the heaviest upon the nation’s conscience, or upon the individual’s heart. We may notice, too, that where there is real, specific confession of sin, there is always aggravation, rather than diminution, of the sins that are confessed. Whenever the man who is not enlightened, nor thoroughly

in earnest, confesses his sins, there is always the echo of an apology ; he always admits extenuating circumstances. But wherever you find in God's Word true confession of sin, you find it always in the language rather of aggravation than otherwise. For instance, the Apostle Paul, after he was converted, confesses his sin thus, in Acts xxvi.: " Which thing I also did in Jerusalem ; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests ; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities ;" every word and epithet implying the unnecessary cruelty he practised, and the aggravated nature of the transgressions which he here commemorates. So did Peter. In the touching incident where our Lord looked upon him, and Peter went out and wept bitterly, it is added, " When he thought thereon ;" it is in our translation in Mark xiv., " he thought thereon ;" but it means literally, " When he cast up all in his mind ;" when he recollect ed how he was chosen from being a fisherman to be an apostle ; how miracles had fed him ; how mercies had accompanied him ; how Jesus had honoured him as a bosom friend ; how he had delivered him from every danger and from every difficulty, and instructed him in ignorance ;—when he cast up all these things in his mind, and then felt that he had denied such a Benefactor, he went out and wept bitterly.

We thus see, that wherever there is true confession,

there will be, not the diminution or extenuation of the offence, but the full, candid, and specific admission of it.

There will be, in the next place, true sorrow. It is said that David watered his couch with his tears; and every tear in David's case had a tongue. God "heard his weeping." And the sorrow that is often deepest is least seen. "When thou fastest, thou art not to appear to men to fast." The sorrow that is deepest rarely finds outward expression; and often there is the keenest where there is the least evidence of it before men. But wherever there is genuine confession, there must be grief; the more real, as we are dealing in confession—what, indeed, is essential to do—not with a judge, not with a tyrant-ruler, but with God our Father. Hence confession of sin is never that of a criminal confessing to a judge, but of a son confessing to his father. Accordingly, in those confessions that we find in the Bible, there is always this filial character. Daniel says, "To the Lord *our* God,"—not "to the Lord God;" but to the Lord *our* God—filial trust. And again, the prodigal said, "I will arise and go to *my* father." He had asked from his master bread, and he gave him the husks that the swine did eat. He then says, "I will arise, and go to my father." Even in his estrangement from home, that beautiful relationship had neither been merged nor forgotten. "We have an Advocate," not with a judge, but an "Advocate with the Father, and he is the propitiation for our sins." Thus, then, terror must not blind the eye to the sight and apprehension of a Father; nor must our recollections of God's justice, God's character as the

Creator and Governor of the universe, ever cause us to lose sight of this—that God is our Father, and that we are his children ; and you will find that the sense of the relationship “Father,” will make the sorrow deepest, the compunction tenderest, the confession truest, fullest, and most real.

Wherever there is true confession, of the kind I have mentioned, there will be, in as far as our conduct to man is concerned, reformation ; in as far as our relationship to God is concerned, reparation. Those things which we have done which we believe to be wrong, it will be our study, our effort, to correct. The more we know of each other, the more we see remains to be forgiven ; the less we know, the more we exact ; but he that knows his own nature best will be most compassionate to the sins, most forgiving to the faults and iniquities, of others. But, in reference to God, what reparation can we make ? If we have misused our youth, we cannot recall its morning beauty ; if we have abused our manhood, we cannot bring back the sun from the western horizon to his noon, and live our life again. Then, what is to be done ? All that we can do is, in the language of the apostle, to seek for full forgiveness for the past through the blood of sprinkling, which is ever offered, and to redeem the time—that is, to put into the remaining years of our life intenser usefulness to man, intenser devotedness to God. Wherever there is genuine confession of sin, there will be, not, indeed, anything offered to God as a propitiation, or anything pledged to God as an atonement. The past never can be recalled ; its deeds cannot be undone. I think it is one of the most solemn thoughts in the world, that an act

once done may be forgiven, or forgotten, but it cannot be annihilated—that is impossible. A thought once felt may be forgiven, or forgotten, but it cannot be annihilated.

The future, from this very day, is open; the years are yet unpledged to sin, folly, and wickedness. Well, if there be earnest supplication for forgiveness for the past, the best evidence that that supplication has been sincere, that the confession has been true, will be that we shall throw greater energy into the years that remain, do more good while we live, and be more devoted to Him who has pardoned the past, and given us grace to make better use of the future.

Having seen what confession is, let me notice, what follows so very beautifully, and what is so encouraging to those who look back upon a past misspent—and no past of any life in this assembly has been spent as it should be, though some pasts may be blacker and more stained than others; but the future is before us, the past is gone from us—we are assured that “if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Now let me show how very remarkable this language is. Just in these very words we have opened out the distinctive glory and excellence of real evangelical Christianity—that God is faithful and just to forgive. We can easily understand, “If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to punish them.” We can understand that the justice of God metes out penalty for crime, wages for work done; but, strange sound!—sound that the ear of nature is not accustomed to—if we confess our sins, he is not ready

to punish them, not faithful and just to destroy us, but "faithful and just to forgive us." Now this is a truth that man has the greatest difficulty in believing, and yet it is the very truth that God is ever inculcating. How striking such words as these wherein God says to sinners: "Come now,"—how beautiful the term is!—"Come now, and let us reason together." God asking man to reason with him! "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be as crimson, they shall be as wool." How very condescending on the part of the great God—"Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as crimson, they shall be as wool!"

But this confession to God—"if we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive"—assumes that he hears the confession. "If we confess, he is faithful and just to forgive." Then God hears our confession, and there is no doubt about it. You need not fear lest words uttered in silence and secrecy on earth have no echo in heaven; you need not doubt that the least feeling of sorrow that sweeps over the human heart shall send a shadow into the presence of God himself. He hears the pulse at the heart—the thought, the wish, the feeling, the desire—faster than we can utter them. Man may be deaf, priests may be hostile, but God ever hears if we confess our sins. Who cares whether a priest be willing or unwilling to forgive it? we need not feel alarmed at it. If we confess our sins, God is faithful, whoever be unfaithful; and God is just, whoever be unjust, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But what is meant by that expression, "He is faithful" to do it? Human nature may arrive at this,—God may be merciful to forgive us; but—this is strange—"faithful and just to forgive sin." It would seem altogether the very reverse of forgiveness that would flow from faithfulness and justice; but it is not so. To be faithful means to be stedfast to a promise made, a word given, or a declaration uttered. Now if you open any part of the Bible you will find it full of promises of pardon, full of invitations to pardon, full of types, shadows, institutions, all indicating the possibility of pardon of sin. In one part, "I will be merciful to their iniquities; their sins and their transgressions will I remember no more." He says in another part, "Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "All his promises in Christ are yea, and Amen." "Faithful," says an apostle, "is he who has promised." Now, wherever you find a promise made in the Bible to you—that is, to sinners—you may plead it with God in prayer: "O Lord, show thyself faithful to fulfil in my happy experience this blessed and consolatory promise;" and the answer is, "God is faithful." You need not doubt it; you may assume it, you may act upon it, and lay the whole stress of the future upon the reality of it.

But it is added, he is not only *faithful*, but he is also *just* to forgive us our sins. He is *just* to forgive us our sins! Merciful to forgive, we do understand; but, just to forgive! how can that be? Here is the

very attribute, justice, which is the exactor of penalty, declared to be the missionary of pardon. Here is the very attribute that we have always regarded as hostile to our admission into heaven now proclaimed to be not only friendly, but to embosom the very right and title of our admission. Here is what we always regarded as the great obstruction to our entrance into heaven announced to be the great impulse, and incentive, and attraction to it. How can this be? I answer: Exclude the Atonement, of which all the atonements in Leviticus were dim prefigurations, and there is no solution of it; but admit the great thought of an Atonement, and it is as plain and clear as daylight itself.

Unless there be some process by which God can vindicate his law, satisfy his own everlasting and immutable attributes, and yet extend forgiveness, God cannot be faithful and just to forgive us our sins. But there is such a provision. Christ bore the penalty, paid the price, endured the curse, exhausted the punishment (vary the phraseology as you please); and God, having received from him, my representative (I do not stop to discuss the principle of accepting a substitute for us; I only assert it as fact, enunciated in the Bible)—God having accepted Christ as my substitute—Christ having borne all that I had deserved as a sinner, and having done all that I owed as a creature,—there is no sin on me to be punished, whatever sin there may be in me unworthy of heaven; for I can plead before God,—Why should I suffer when my Representative has suffered for me? Why should I be excluded from heaven when my Representative has made a way for me? Thou art a just God: thou

dost not exact the price twice; thou dost not demand the penalty twice; and therefore in Him who is my representative, my substitute, my righteousness, I ask not of thy mercy only to forgive me, but I ask of thee to be faithful to thy word, and just by Christ Jesus, to forgive me all my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. It is mercy that I can plead it; it is justice that God thus bestows it. Do not, therefore, if I speak to a sinner--or rather, to a Christian--do not, therefore, think that the law will stand in your way to heaven; do not fear that God's attributes will stand in your way to glory. All his attributes, instead of being your enemies, are your irresistible and eloquent advocates. God's attributes are sentinels around the chiefest of sinners that flee to him through Christ, as the mountains stand around Jerusalem. In other words, there is no condemnation—to whom? There is no curse, no hell, no punishment—to whom? Not to those that are perfect, not to those that never sinned,—but "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," their representative, their substitute. And how beautiful is that text which I have often quoted,—"He was made sin for us, that we might be made righteousness in him!" How was he made sin for us? Our sins were laid on him—therefore he bore the consequence. How are we made righteousness by him? By his righteousness laid upon us—therefore we inherit the consequences. If God was just when he let forth his wrath upon Christ because of our sins upon him, not in him, God will be but just to let forth the expressions of his love because of Christ's righteousness upon us, not in us. When Christ died in agony upon the cross, there was nothing in him

worthy of death ; when I shall be admitted into heaven at the judgment seat, there will be nothing in me worthy of eternal life. Christ's title to a cross was my sin on him ; and my title to a weight of glory will be his righteousness upon me. God therefore is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. What a glorious truth ! No man who understands justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ will ever become a papist—it is impossible ; and nothing will save you from superstition and delusion, and all the mummeries of exploded and miserable superstition, except a clear living grasp of this, that we need nothing to perfect a title which is perfect, because Christ's ; we need nothing to increase an atonement which is all-efficacious, because Christ's ; we are complete in him, all our salvation and all our desire. And to show you that my conclusions are not mere conclusions of the intellect, an apostle could say, after speaking of such truths as these, " Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? "—that is, God's people. Will God do it ? No, says the apostle, " It is God that justifieth." What is meant by justifying ? To justify is explained for instance, in the Proverbs, where he says, " He that justifieth the wicked and condemneth the just, doeth abomination." In other words, who shall justify the wicked, pronounce them innocent or unimpeachable who are really criminal ? Well now, to justify us is to pronounce us just through the justice of another, who are otherwise criminal ; and our justification lies not in our grace of holiness, but in God's act of grace ; not in our deeds, but in his deed of absolution and forgiveness ; not in my estimate of myself, but in

God's sentence upon me. Well now, says the : “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?” Not God, “it is God that justifieth.” “Who is he that condemneth ?” Not Christ. “It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” And therefore he adds—mind you, Paul, a sinner, according to his own confession the chiepest of sinners, whose early life was employed in persecuting and proscribing and murdering the followers of Jesus ; this Paul, by grace, was brought into that state that he could say, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword ? I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” What a triumphant clause ! and yet it is not the language of presumption, it is the language of humble trust. Presumption means thinking that God can pardon without a sacrifice—that he can be just to forgive without an atonement ; but humility is feeling we have nothing and deserve nothing ; but feeling that God is so faithful, so just, that we can anticipate far richer results than we enjoy in the present : that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now that expression, “faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” reminds me of the infinite variety of expressions that God uses to tell us how complete this act of forgiveness is. He is faithful and just to

forgive us. I do not know any one thought clothed in such variegated drapery as the thought of God's forgiving sin. He varies the phraseology not to express his meaning, but to interest and engage our hearts. For instance, in one part he calls it "remission of sins." Man is in bondage, surrounded by dungeon walls; the chains of his sins bind him to the spot. God touches his chains, they are dissolved by the touch, and he has remission of sins, or the loosing of his bonds. Then another phrase he employs is, "not imputing our sins." They are countless as the sand, they are innumerable as the hairs on our head; and yet he does not impute them. Why? Because he imputed them to Christ. Another expression is, "Not remembered"—"I will remember their sins and their iniquities no more." In the Levitical sacrifices there is a remembrance of sin made every year, but by this sacrifice there is no remembrance of sin for ever; as if God, in order to convince us of the completeness of the pardon, had said, that they shall be expunged from his memory for ever. Again, he uses the expression, "Cover their sins"—"whose sins thou hast covered." The Hebrew word *kaphar*, which means to cover, and from which our English word "cover" comes, is the word used in the Old Testament for the atonement; and the meaning of it is, that just as a man covered with a robe—an external robe—has thus concealed from the eye under-robes that may not be so fair or beautiful; so a sinner—sinner in himself—having spread over him the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, thus has his sin covered. And the meaning of it is, not that it is a material transaction, but that God will deal with

him just as if he were spotless as the driven snow, unstained, beautiful, and perfect.

Another expression is, "Taking away our sins." The Israelite confessed his sins over the head of the scape-goat; then the goat was dismissed into the desert; and the sins of the Israelite, thus confessed, were typically transferred to the goat, and never any more heard of.

Another expression is, "Blotting out." Just as if your sins were like inscriptions upon the sand of the sea shore, washed out by the first wave of infinite and boundless love.

Another expression is, "Casting behind his back." In one passage, "Our secret sins hast thou set in the light of thy countenance,"—a most awful expression; but in order to show you the completeness of his forgiveness, "All our sins he has cast behind his back." And again, the expression occurs, "cleansing"—"the blood of Christ," that is, the efficacy of his sacrifice, "cleanseth from all sin." Another passage which contains almost every epithet is, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, that passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, that keepeth not his anger for ever, delighteth in mercy? He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Now, if meaning is not conveyed by these expressions of the completeness, the instance of a sinner's forgiveness, then this Book has no meaning at all. But why all this—why all this phraseology so varied, so cumulative? The answer is,—It is so difficult to persuade you that God will do it. As I have often said, it is the simplicity of Christianity that is its stumbling-

block. It is not a sacrifice to offer, a priest to sacrifice it, penance to do, payment to make; but it is just to believe this truth, embosomed in the text on which I am preaching to you this day; and which I have unfolded, not wandered from. The man that can take this text home with him, and with his heart feel it, and from his heart confess, and with his heart believe—that man is a true Christian, and the rest of his life hereafter will be irresistible demonstration that he is so. And hence it is added here, while God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, he is also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now this is something additional. Many persons, when they hear the evangelical minister preach, and pronounce that our admission into heaven is not because of anything we may do, but in spite of it—when they hear the minister preach that our title to glory, our admission into heaven, is not in consequence of anything done by us, but in spite of everything done by us in the past, they say, “Why, if people act up to that minister’s prescriptions, they will plunge into every sort of sin; they will feel that sin is no barrier to their admission into heaven.” That is what you feel, I dare say, when you look at it from a distance; but you well know that when a man has got this sense of God’s fatherly goodness he has received a new life, and he does not want to do what he wanted to do before. This is not a theorem for man to act upon, but it is a life for man continually to live. Wherever there is the pardon of sin by an act of grace without, there is the ceaseless extinction of sin by the Spirit’s influence within. Our pardon is a change of state; our cleansing from all unrighteous-

ness is a change of character. Because we say good works are of no use as our title to heaven, we do not say we are not therefore to do good works; our title to heaven is irrespective of them altogether; but our fitness for heaven is just that character which you have—living soberly and righteously in this present world. We lost our title to heaven in Paradise; Christ has restored it in his righteousness. We defaced our image of God in Paradise, and the Holy Spirit restores that image by his presence. So that a Christian forgiven freely through Christ's righteousness, and accepted and justified, is day by day sanctified—day by day he seeks love to guide him, grace to influence him, the Holy Spirit to keep him from falling.

Having seen the very substance and pith of all that is most precious in the gospel, let me ask, Have you—hast thou, ever confessed thy sins, thy secret sins; the sins of thy youth, the sins of thy riper years, the sins of the solemn things, the omissions you have made, the commissions you have perpetrated? You have confessed them in the sanctuary, but have you ever confessed them when no mortal ear could hear them at all? Have you ever been alone with God? Have you ever felt, have you ever realized, being alone with God? You must one day be so; you must walk through the valley of the shadow of death alone; you must render up the ghost alone. Physicians may accompany you to the brink of the grave; enter they cannot. They may go with you to the very verge of the valley of the shadow of death; accompany you they cannot. Is it not well, is it not expediency, is it not duty,—oh, no! is it not rather precious privilege

in this life, to be occasionally alone with God? Do not let every man say, "This is meant for a whole audience;" it is meant as much for you A, for you B, for you C, as if you and I were the only two speaking together this day. What one so grieves is, that persons treat an appeal to their consciences as porters treat a heavy load—when six carry it, it is very light upon each shoulder. And you think, because there are some seventeen hundred listening to me, therefore a very small and infinitesimal quantity of it extends to you. But what I say to all I say to each, as if that individual were the only one present. I ask,—Have I ever been alone with God? Have I confessed to him my secret sins—sins the world does not know, sins that may be forgiven, but that cannot be forgotten? My dear friends, if it has never been so, I will not pronounce on such—that is not my function; but I will say that he has great reason to suspect if he be a Christian at all. He may be an amiable man—a gentle, quiet, charitable, generous man; and all this he ought to be. Surely, surely, all this you ought to be. But there is something more than that; there is relationship to a God we need restored; there is restoration to an image we have lost; there is reinstatement in a favour we have forfeited: have we found that? Our sun is setting behind the western hills: will he rise to us more beautiful in the everlasting east? The tide is ebbing: if we miss it, our voyage to the everlasting haven may be lost for ever. Is our trust on the Rock of Ages? Is our confidence in God's faithfulness and justice to forgive us our sins—suppose death were now to overtake you (and I am not supposing anything very extraordinary) what

would you say, what could you say? Oh! would you be constrained to say, "I heard truths that would make the lost in misery leap for ecstasy, that angels listen to, and are startled by their music; and I heard them, and went, one to his farm and another to his merchandise: and I have not rejected—for I never was bold enough to do that—but I have neglected the great salvation!"

But how shall we escape, if we, not reject, but neglect, so great salvation?

CHAPTER III.

THE SACRIFICE OF SWEET-SMELLING SAVOUR.

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."—EPHESIANS v. 2.

THE words of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour," best illustrate two or three expressions almost similar in word which have occurred in the first three chapters of the Book of Leviticus. In the course of these three chapters we have read very frequently the expression, "Sweet savour unto the Lord," "A savour of a sweet smell," or "A sweet-smelling savour unto God." Thus in the first chapter, at the ninth verse: "A burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." Thus again, in the seventeenth verse: "It is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." In the second chapter, at the ninth verse: "It is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord;" and again, at the fifth verse of the third chapter: "It is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." You observe that almost at the close of every

offering, and as the consequence of the presentation of every victim, if acceptable to God, it is presented under the expressive and the beautiful figure of a sacrifice, fragrant of a sweet smell, acceptable to Him by whose order it has been offered, and in order to propitiate or draw down whose mercy it has been presented by the offerer.

Now, the words of Paul, that I have just read in his Epistle to the Ephesians, are the echo of the words of Moses, in the first three chapters of Leviticus: in fact, the verse I have given is an epitome, or summary in brief of the meaning, the end, and the object of the many sacrifices, presented by many priests, which could never take away sin, now summed up, represented and finished in that one Sacrifice offered once for all upon the cross, through which we have access to God, and by which we are sanctified.

The apostle then speaks of Christ himself, as the Giver, who gave himself; he then speaks for what he gave himself; he then describes that gift under the figure of an offering and a sacrifice; and then he describes its acceptableness to God under the figure of "a sweet-smelling savour unto God."

We have first of all, then, in this *résumé* of the end and object of all the sacrifices of Levi, the Giver who gave himself. Who was he? First, he was man. We assert, just as strongly as the Socinian can assert, that Jesus was man. It is the glory of the Gospel that he was so. The object of the evangelists is not to prove that he was God; every Jew believed that the Messiah was God; but the difficulty that the Jews felt was,—had he become man? which the Jew constantly and consistently denied. Now, we assert that

Jesus was man, in all points as we are ;—in his heart the echo of our wrongs ; in his nature sympathy with our sorrows and our sufferings that are deepest ; in all points touched and tempted like as we are : but only without sin, which is no part of humanity. Sin is no part of me. When God made me, he did not make sin in me ; sin was no part of man when God pronounced him in Eden to be very good. So Christ was perfect man. And, in the next place, he was a royal man. He was descended of a royal, but a dis-crowned family ; sunk by poverty, affliction, obscurity. And he was royal in that he was a king. “Art thou a king ?” “Thou sayest,”—that is, I am. All the prerogatives of royalty were, and are, his.

But whilst he was man—a sinless man, and a royal man—he that gave himself was also God. I cannot consent to weed out the texts that say Christ was God, and fling them away, and fasten on the texts that say he was man, and strain and stretch them to the utmost. I must read the Bible just as God has inspired it ; and if I read upon the one page, “The Word was made flesh,”—“Jesus is a man of sorrows ;” why should I weed out of the next page, “By him all things were made ; and without him was not anything made that was made.”—“And though in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, he took upon him the form of a servant ?” How can the Socinian say the form of God is not the same as God ? Then, I must add, the form of a servant is not the same as a servant. But if the taking upon him the form of a servant, means that he really became a servant ; so, in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, means that he was

God over all, blessed for evermore. But I need no text to demonstrate that Christ was God, except the simple prediction, that he is to be the Judge of all flesh. If God be not upon the judgment-seat, where can he be? If there be a place where the presence of Deity is demanded, it is that place where all hearts will be laid bare—where all destinies will be adjusted—where the mighty group will consist of the millions and millions of the world from the beginning. If man be capable of searching all hearts, fixing all destinies, and, with perfect accuracy, dealing with each according to what he is, man cannot be what he is defined to be in the Bible—the frail, the imperfect, the weak, the limited creature, that our own experience also attests him to be. And, at all events, if Christ be not God, the inhabitants of heaven must be guilty of blasphemy. I open the Apocalypse; I gaze in at that door which John saw opened in heaven; I listen to the anthems that are there. No Socinian can be there; it is impossible he could join in the hymns of heaven. How could a Socinian say, “Unto him that loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, unto him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever?” How could a Unitarian say, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive praise, and thanksgiving, and glory, and honour!”—“Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood out of every kindred, and every nation, and every tongue, and we shall reign with thee?” That is the language of adoration, of praise, of prayer.

Thus, then, the Being who gave himself was God—first man, a sinless man, a royal, though a discrowned man; and lastly God.

Now, what did he give? He gave *himself*. Mark the language—*gave*, not was induced to give, or permitted to be given, or had exacted from him—he *gave* freely, generously, as the expression of irrepressible love, in the exercise of boundless benevolence: he freely gave. And he gave—what? Not an angel; the highest hierarch about the throne has no more holy light than he needs for himself. He has nothing to spare for me. Every creature is made with sufficient for its own orbit, and for the continuance of its own beautiful and holy being; but it has nothing to spare for others. And he did not give any saint. The virgins that were wise had oil in their own lamps; they had none to spare for others. The highest Christian in this assembly has grace; he has none to spare for another. He can tell you where he got his supply—where you are welcome to go also for supply; but he can spare nothing, nor give ought of what God has given him for himself. Nor did he give riches. Money, that has the most rapid currency on earth, has no currency in heaven; it has not the impress and the superscription of Him who reigns supreme there. “Ye are not redeemed with gold or silver, or any such corruptible thing.” Nor, in the last place, did he give the blood of bulls and of goats, which were shadows of that which should be. These, I say, so frequently alluded to in Leviticus, were the dim footprints of his advent; leading the believer to stretch his hopes onward to the cross, and to rely on and glorify him. If these sacrifices could have atoned for sin, having done their work, they would have ceased to be offered. But the fact, says the apostle, that they were offered year by year, was proof that they never could make the comers

thereunto perfect. He therefore gave, not the blood of bulls and of innocent goats, but something more precious than all these. He gave himself. He was man, that he might be capable of suffering what we had drawn down upon ourselves ; he was God, that he might be able to give virtue to all those sufferings that should make them, not the sufferings of a man, but the sufferings of an atoning and an expiatory victim. He gave himself. He gave his body to sorrow and the sword ; he gave his soul to sorrow, but not to the sword ; he gave his deity neither to sorrow nor to the sword, but to communicate virtue, efficacy, all that was needed to render his sufferings not those of a creature enduring chastisement from a father, nor of a criminal enduring punishment from a judge ; but of a victim, making expiation for the sins of all that believe.

And he gave himself alone. There was no partner in his agony. When Mary obtruded herself upon him, he repelled her firmly, but gently. And as there was no partner in his agony, as he trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him, as there is no salvation in any other name given among men, so there will be no sharer in his glory. He endured the cross ; he must wear exclusively the crown : he bore all the penalty, and exhausted it ; he must receive all the glory of the ransom of his precious blood—he gave himself alone.

And to whom did he give himself ? He gave himself to God, says the apostle, in the text. Against God we had sinned ; to God was the reparation due. He was the party offended ; the great obstruction was between him and us. Till he was satisfied, sinners, by the very nature of the thing, never could be saved.

Whilst he gave himself to God, says the apostle, he gave himself to God for us. Now let anybody read the language of Leviticus, and see what is said of the different sacrifices, offerings, *holocausts*; and then read what is said of Christ's death, and see the very same language applied to Christ's death that was applied to the offerings, the victims, and the sacrifices of Levi; and then say, is it possible to come to any other conclusion than this—that Christ lived and died for us, not an example how purely we should live, nor a precedent how magnanimously we should die, but an atonement, a substitute, a vicarious offering, a sacrifice for our sins, that they might be forgiven, and that the guilty might be gloriously saved?

He gave himself, first, it says in our text, an offering for us—an offering and a sacrifice. His whole life was an offering, his whole death was a sacrifice. I say, his whole life was an offering. He opened his ear to every command of God, and did it. He did for us creatures in his life all that we ought to do. His obedience, it is true, was exemplary, just as the exactations of the law are obligatory; but this is the emphatic distinction of his obedience—that he obeyed as our representative and substitute, not as a model for us to imitate, but as an offering for us to plead; not as an example for us to follow only, but as a righteousness for us to put on. He did what as creatures we had not done; he obeyed a law which, as creatures, we could not obey; and thus his whole beautiful and spotless life was a holy and a spotless offering to God of absolute, unspent, and unwavering obedience; not for me to imitate merely, but for me to put on, to be clothed in, to plead as my right and

my title to heaven, saying to God at the judgment-seat, "I have obeyed that law in Christ my Head and Representative; and therefore I am entitled to all the promises and the blessings it contains."

But while he lived as an offering, it is added he died also as a sacrifice. He gave himself, says the apostle, an offering and a sacrifice. His tears of anguish, his agony of soul, his painful death, closed by his last cry, "It is finished!" was the complete holocaust, the complete burnt sacrifice made upon the cross for us and for our sins. And just mark how complete this character is. As creatures we owed obedience to the law of our Creator; Christ gave it for us. As sinners we had incurred the curse of God our Judge; Christ bore that curse for us. So that when I am asked, why should not the curse fall upon me, with its ceaseless and corroding pressure? I answer, My Head, my Representative, my Substitute, has borne it, and exhausted it for me. Why should I be admitted into heaven, not having obeyed the law? My answer is, My Head, my Representative, accepted by God for me in my stead, has obeyed the law for me. Therefore, justified by his righteousness, forgiven by his sacrifice, there is no sin *on* me, while there are many sins *in* me; and I am clothed with spotless righteousness; and may be presented in him, and through him, and by his merits, part and parcel of his glorious church, without spot, or blemish, or any such thing. How complete is a sinner in Christ the Saviour!

Let us notice in the next place, that this sacrifice and offering is described as a sweet-smelling savour; and for this I have especially selected the text. What is meant

by this? We find it explained in the Book of Genesis, where Noah, after he came forth from the ark, offered up a sacrifice, a burnt-offering; and the Lord smelted a sweet savour; and the Lord said, I will not again curse the ground for man's sake. We have the very same expression explained, rather than used, in Philippians iv. 18, where the apostle says, "But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing"—that is the explanation—"to God." Now, what was it in Christ that was thus well pleasing or acceptable to God? It was not, as the Unitarian would say, his holy and spotless obedience, his pure life, only that was thus acceptable; it was no doubt; but the apostle says, the thing that was acceptable to God—that was a sweet-smelling savour, that rose to heaven like an ascending cloud of delicious fragrance, was his sacrifice and his offering. It was not an example of a sweet-smelling savour, but a sacrifice and an offering of a sweet-smelling savour. In other words, what God regards specially as acceptable to him, is the atoning death, the meritorious righteousness of Christ, our substitute, our sacrifice, and our salvation. But, you ask, Why should this be specially pleasing and acceptable to God? Has God any pleasure in suffering? We are told he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner; how much less could he have had pleasure in the death, the agony, the suffering of the spotless, the holy, the blameless, Son of God? He could have had no pleasure in this. Then what was it that made these sufferings so fragrant before God? Christ explains it. He says that what made him endure the

cross with such delight, was the joy set before him. Isaiah thus explains the joy set before him, "He shall see of the travail of his soul,"—that is, the result of it,—"and he shall be satisfied." And, therefore, just as Christ bore the cross for the sake of the magnificent results it should achieve, so God looked at his sufferings, and saw through them those glorious harvests of which angels shall be the reapers, and on which God should look with infinite satisfaction, and unspeakable delight.

But what are some of the results accomplished by this offering and sacrifice that make it a sweet smelling savour, acceptable to God? I answer, first, the law of God is vindicated in the death of Christ, and covered with a richer lustre than it ever could have been covered with if Adam and Eve had remained in their first innocence, and Eden retained amaranthine verdure and beauty. The law set in the innocence of first obedience would have been beautiful; but the law in the setting of Christ's obedience for us is more lustrous and splendid still. It is more seen to be holy, just, faithful, indestructible, because, God would rather than that one jot or tittle should pass from his law, that the whole of humanity should perish, or his own Son, its substitute, should suffer in its stead.

And, in the second place, it is a sweet smelling savour to God, inasmuch as God's children are all saved through it. I cannot conceive the universe to have any order, God's law to have any fixity, God himself to be a holy God, if he admits the guilty and the innocent, the fallen and the unfallen, equally to the enjoyment, or relatively to the enjoyment, of the

glories of the blessed. It was impossible that man could be saved by nature by the law as he is, without some interposition that should satisfy all demands, meet every necessity, make provision for every requirement, and enable God, if I may use the expression, to receive the guilty as if the guilty had never fallen. Now in Christ's death sin is forgiven, and the sinner is saved, while the law is upheld, and God is glorified. And the sin, while forgiven to the sinner, is by the same process made more hateful to the sinner; so that there is not only pardon for the past, but in the same process by which the pardon is conveyed, there is a guarantee that there shall be greater, richer, nobler conformity to God's law in all the future.

And in the next place, the sacrifice was a sweet-smelling savour to God, inasmuch as it gives glory to himself. You see much of God in creation, and if it had never been stained, creation's bright mirror had reflected vastly more of God's goodness than it now does; we see much of God in the law,—“Thou shalt, and thou shalt not;” and its exactions, which extend not to words and deeds, but to thoughts and imaginations: but we see vastly more of God—of his holiness, of his justice, of his truth, and of his love in the forgiveness of a sinner, through Christ the sacrifice, than we ever could have seen if Calvary had never been, and Christ had never suffered. And I doubt not that what has been transacted upon this earth is not for this earth alone. This earth is the mirror into which all the orbs of the universe, circling it as in a splendid zone, continually gaze to learn how holy God is—that rather than that his law should be broken his Son should suffer to see how just God is, and, above

all, how loving God is ; that he so loved the guilty in their ruins, that he would do anything short of the sacrifice of his law to save them ; "he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might never perish, but have eternal life." The chapters of this world's history will be read for millions and millions of years to come. I have no doubt that this earth is the most wonderful phenomenon in time or in eternity. I have no doubt that this world, with all that has taken place upon it, is a spectacle that angels and unfallen worlds will never weary in gazing at. It is God's great lesson-book for all the universe beside ; and as orb after orb, and race after race, hear of its wondrous tidings, they will join with the redeemed that are around the throne in new bursts of song, in new anthems to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto our God.

Let me notice, in the next place, that it was this perfume that made the offerings of Levi at all tolerable to God and to man. I can conceive nothing in itself more offensive than the ancient temple or tabernacle ; it was almost a sort of slaughter-house; the constant bleeding of slain lambs and sheep, and bullocks, was a most offensive, painful, undesirable process. Then why was it borne ? It was the fragrance of this offering that was to be in the fulness of the time that mingled with the smoke of Levi's sacrifices, and made them acceptable before God. Take away Christianity from Leviticus, and Leviticus would only be fit for the gods of the Pantheon ; but let the light of the evangelist fall upon the face of Levi—let the offering of Christ be seen in

their burnt-offerings—let this perfume be smelt in their ascending smoke—let the shadow of Jesus be seen upon the walls of the ancient sanctuary,—and what in itself was so offensive to flesh and blood becomes beautiful, and holy, and fragrant, and acceptable to God.

And, lastly, it is this sweet-smelling savour of Christ's sacrifice, and the advocacy that follows it, that render all that we think, all that we do, our best and our holiest acts, acceptable to God. You have it fully explained in that very beautiful passage in the Apocalypse, where we read that an angel, namely, Christ, stood at the altar of incense, where the high priest stood, having a golden censer, which the high priest alone had; and there was given to him much incense, the sweet-smelling savour of his own sacrifice, that he should offer the incense with the prayers of all saints, to give perfume, and efficacy, and acceptance to those prayers, upon the golden altar which was before the throne; that our prayers, and our praises, and our acts, and our alms, may be thus acceptable to God, not in themselves, but because put into the golden censer, mingled with the ascending perfume, which, like a sweet-smelling savour, rises to God, ever an acceptable sacrifice.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR ADVOCATE.

" My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 JOHN ii. 1.

You will easily perceive that the text I have selected alludes almost in word to the sins of ignorance of which we have been reading in the fourth chapter of the Book of Leviticus. The provision, as I explained, in that chapter, is for sins committed in ignorance; the provision in the text I have quoted is, "If any man sin"—whether he know it or not; be it a sin of ignorance, or a sin of wilfulness—"we have an advocate with the Father," who is, what the sacrifice in Leviticus was typically—"the propitiation," the atonement "for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

I know nothing so satisfactory to the Christian, or so precious, as the truths enunciated by the Evangelist John. And whether we take his beautiful gospel called "the Gospel of the Father," because it is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of believers that that personation of love mostly dwells on—or,

whether we take his Three Epistles—one general, and the other special, to an Elect Lady—we find in all these precious truths which make miserable hearts happy, lead sinful souls to the knowledge of forgiveness, and the victims of despair to be the inheritors of a blessed hope beyond the sky. How precious the sentiment in the first chapter here—“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son,”—not once cleansed, and has now lost its efficacy, but *cleanseth*—the present tense—in 1854 just as fully as 1800 years ago! And it cleanseth, not from some sins; not from trivial ones, or what are called venial ones; but from all sin. What a truth to live with! What a hope to die in! Not the literal blood—as it was literal in the case of the slain bullock—but the precious efficacy of it. Christ is sacrificed for us, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour; meaning that the sacrifice burned upon the altar is thus presented amid incense in the holy of holies, and, as the ceaseless perfume of that deed that was done on Calvary 1800 years ago, it rises to heaven like aromatic incense, and spreads to the skies, exhilarating to all that are there, and acceptable like a sweet savour of perfume before the Most High.

“If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves.” There is no perfection upon earth; we cannot have on earth the innocence that Adam had—it is gone; we cannot have on earth the perfection that saints in glory have—it is not come. Our condition upon earth is a law in our members warring against the law of our spirit; the ascendancy obtained through struggle; imperfection upon earth; the Christian life, like the April day, sunshine and showers in succession, cloud and brightness alternating, but ending

at length in a bright sky that never shall be clouded. If any man say, "I have no sin," that man is either trying to deceive me, or he deceives himself. Then what does he say? "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but"—beautiful addition!—"if we confess our sins,"—not to the priest, because we have not sinned against him; but to God, of whom he is speaking,—"if we confess our sins, God is"—not merciful; that you could easily suppose—but he is faithful to his promise to forgive—"he is faithful and just." God is just while justifying the believer. How beautiful, that the two attributes of God that human nature would quote against forgiveness, as it imagines, the apostle quotes as the very two that seal, and sanction, and proclaim our complete forgiveness—"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins!" And then again, lest poor human nature should forget this precious resource, he repeats, "If any man sin"—whether the high priest, or the ruler of the people, or one of the common people, or one of the congregation—"if *any* man sin,"—whatever he be, whatever his age, his position, or rank—"if any man sin, we have"—we have, not hope for—"an advocate with the Father; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only," but it is available to all the ends of the earth, for all that will accept it.

Thus, we see how much of the Gospel is in this beautiful epistle, even on its very preface. He begins the second chapter with this remark, "My little children." When John wrote this epistle, he was very nearly ninety years of age; the Book of Revelation was written in Patmos when he was nearly a hundred;

but he was at least ninety when he wrote this epistle. Pause to imagine, that beautiful grey hair, resplendent with the first beams of the approaching glory ; and think of that venerable saint, ripe in grace, and consecrated, not otherwise, by years, addressing believers as his "little children,"—his family, his flock—and saying, "I write unto you," not that you may reverence me, or do anything for me; but "I write unto you that ye sin not." And what does he teach by this? That the whole strain and tendency of Christianity, the whole scope of God's revealed Word, is to put an end to sin. Its promises, its precepts, its hopes, its requirements, its thoughts, all go to put an end to sin. Nobody can deny, whatever else he may assert, that the Bible's tendency is to make man holier and happier even upon earth; and if we did not see its tendency, it so frequently asserts it, that we cannot possibly deny it. "Ye are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, to show forth the praises of him who hath called you from darkness into his marvellous light." "The grace of God teacheth us to live soberly, righteously, godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope." The best evidence of Christianity is its fruits. I do not say there may not be noble, honourable, impressive *traits* in human character without Christianity; but I do say that wherever Christianity is, those *traits* will be, and not only will they be, but they will be beautified, and inspired, and covered with a richer glory. When we assert that man is fallen and corrupt, we do not mean to say that earth has become a Pandemonium, and that men are become demons. This is not true. There are still on the surface of humanity the linger-

ing rays of Paradise ; there are still in the hearts of humanity the feelings that were first felt in Paradise ; there is much that is beautiful in human nature developed by its finest specimens ; but we must also admit that there is much that is degraded and desperately wicked in these, and developed by its worst ; and we still more maintain that the only power that can lift human nature to that table-land on which it will shine most beautiful, and bear its most fragrant fruit, is the Gospel of the Son of God.

" Little children, I write unto you that ye sin not." This is the end and object of my writing. But he says, " If any man sin." He says, it is quite plain that while this is what we ought not to do, it is right that there should be a provision made for what will occur in the case of every man, in every age, and under every circumstance. " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." And then this is connected with the previous passage—that " if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." But the phrase, " if any man sin," implies that purity and holiness will be the spontaneous fruits of Christian character, and that the sin will be incidental or accidental. He assumes throughout the whole passage, that not to sin is the polarity or the tendency of a true Christian ; but he also admits the possibility, nay, the probability, nay, the certainty, of a flaw in the best—sin in the holiest ; and therefore he states the provision, " If any man sin." Man breathes an infected air ; he has a law in his members still warning against the law of his soul : and he that knows his own heart best will be the first to sympathize with the infirmities, the sins, as well as the fears of

the rest of mankind. The least enlightened are the least sympathizing; the truest Christian has ever the richest sympathy. The high priest of old had infirmities and ignorances that he must atone for; but our Great High Priest alone has no ignorance or infirmity of his own to atone for; but it is said, we have one who can sympathize with our infirmities, and can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.

Having thus seen the introduction to the provision, let me notice now its two leading positions—namely, an Advocate with the Father, and a propitiation for our sins.

We have, first of all, he says, an advocate with the Father; a paraclete: the word, singularly enough, applied to the Holy Spirit of God, meaning one that represents us. In fact, excluding the infirmity that cleaves to the human, it is just the advocate and the client in the human court; but instead of an advocate and a client having to deal with a judge bound to rigid law, it is an Advocate with our Father, dealing with his children according to mercy, as well as justice, after love as well as truth. We have an Advocate with the Father, and thus, as our advocate, Christ appears in heaven. How significant is that expression of the apostle—"Christ has gone to heaven to appear for us!" There is no intimation that he speaks for us in heaven; whilst he has still human lips, and a human heart, and human sensibilities, yet there is no evidence that he speaks for us. All that the apostle says, is, that he appears for us. Let him be dumb, the spectacle is intensely eloquent; let our Advocate say nothing, yet there he is, with all the

traces of his agony—with all the trophies of his victory—our representative, the first-fruits of our humanity; so that whatever he deserves we deserve; whatever he is—whatever he has attained—we may be. There is the possibility of our admission into heaven, for a human one has gone before us; there is the certainty of our admission, for our Advocate is there pleading for us; and pleading, not with a judge that delights to repel us, but with our Father, too happy (if I may speak in language strictly human) to have an opportunity of letting forth his mercy upon us. An Advocate with the Father.

We notice, in the next place, while he is our Advocate with the Father, it is in connexion with forgiveness. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." What is the use of the advocate here? To obtain for him that sin's forgiveness. If sin were impossible in Christians, then an advocate would be unnecessary in heaven. As long as we have an advocate with the Father, so long there is the possibility of our sinning upon earth. And what does he say when he secures for us forgiveness? He answers the law, replies to every objection. What does an advocate do now? If an honest one, and not one that gets up and speaks lies in order to let a criminal escape, he will put every point that is favourable to his client in the most prominent light; and he will also, if the law goes against his client, state what reasons there are for softening or mitigating the penalty of the law. He will not deny his guilt, but he will show reasons for a mitigated sentence. Our Blessed Lord does not deny our sin in fact, or guilt, but he shows how it may be pardoned.

He does not deny that God is just, but he shows (I am speaking of course in human speech ; it is all seen, it needs not to be laid out in heaven in detail ; but I am analyzing it, and stating in fragments what we can only comprehend in fragments,) hows God's justice, and truth, and faithfulness, and love, may be more glorious, may be seen by the universe more intense in their character, by the forgiveness of the greatest sinner that has recourse to the Advocate with the Father, than they ever could have been seen by the extinction of our orb, and the condemnation of all his progeny upon it. Now what a blessed thought is this—that our Advocate in heaven, whether in speech or otherwise, is at this moment showing that there are no such reasons for our ruin, as there are for our salvation ; that there are ten thousand times ten thousand more reasons why you and I should be saved for ever, than there are why you and I should be condemned. It is easy to teach men to be terrified at God, and to think of God as a terrible and an awful Being, ready to consume them in a moment ; but it is very difficult to persuade them that God seeks to bless them ; that there is nothing to prevent his richest blessing descending upon them ; that the obstruction is not in Christ, the Way, but in their own hearts. “Ye will not come to me, that ye may be saved.”

Now, argues the apostle here, “If any man sin,” it is not, as in the case of thousands, to drive you to despair. He does not say, If any man sin, let him despair ; but, If any man sin, here is the provision. We have an Advocate. The tendency of a sinner when he sins, when he has been unfortunate enough to sin,

—for of all misfortunes on earth that is the worst—is, to run and hide himself from God—there is no doubt of this—and to try to get rid of the thoughts of his sin; and he thinks that he gets rid of his sin by getting rid of the thoughts of it; as an ostrich, pursued in the desert, buries its head in the sand, and thinks the Arab steed will be unable to overtake it, because it cannot see it. But that is not the way. John says, If any man sin, we are not to try to forget it, nor are we to despair; but we have an Advocate for such a contingency, to whom we may go and receive instantly forgiveness. Ask nature, “If any man sin, what is he to do?” Nature must answer, “I know not, and have been unable for six thousand years to discover.” Ask the law, “If any man sin, what is he to do?” It will answer, “There is only for him a fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation.” Ask the Pope of Rome what he is to do. Kneel down and confess to a priest, and get absolution! Ask the Holy Spirit what he is to do. If any man sin, we have not a priest to introduce us, not a saint to guide us, but access, personally, directly, and without obstruction, to an Advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Beautiful and blessed gospel! Is any man sick? We have a Physician. Is any man in debt? We have the great Paymaster, Jesus Christ. Any man dying? We have Life. Any oppressed? We have an Advocate to take up our cause. Any man guilty? A Propitiation for our sins.

Our Redeemer is here set before us officially—our Advocate. I want you to see the full stress of this. When we look upon Christ as our advocate, then he

becomes most dear, most precious. But he is our advocate, because it is his office. When a man holds an office, I apply to him in the expectation that he will fulfil the duties of that office. If I go to a physician, I do not expect that he is to send me away, or that he is to talk politics or science, but that he is to learn what my complaint is, and prescribe for its cure. If I go to a lawyer, I do not expect that he is to explain statutes or Acts of Parliament to me, but that he is to fulfil his office, and defend my cause. I expect the sun to shine, because he is appointed for that purpose; I expect the stars to twinkle at night, because such is their use; and I expect Jesus—I say it with reverence and with joy—to intercede for me, and plead for me, and take up my cause, because it is his office to do so. He is set forth, says the apostle, to be the propitiation for our sins, through faith in his precious blood. Now what a truth is here,—that no man can go to Christ as his advocate, and be rejected! It is his office to intercede and to plead.

But this expression, “If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father,” implies that we have an advocate to apply to. We must fill up the sentence. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father *to apply to*;” not to pay for, not to search out, not to invent or create, but ready for his function, rejoicing to do his work, as the sun like a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber, and like a strong man to run a race, to apply to. And it is without any loss of time. “If any man sin we *have* an advocate;” not, we have to wait till arrangements are made, till adjustments are all filled; not, as we have to do when we go to consult a physician or a barrister, till his

chamber is emptied of crowds of previous applicants. But if any man sin, we have an advocate *now*, without interruption, without delay, and without obstruction of any kind, to apply to, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world; and the lightning flame does not flash from one end of the globe to another with such rapidity as the prayer of a sinner addressed to Jesus passes to the mercy-seat; for the promise is, "Whilst they are yet speaking, I will answer." Faster than an angel's wing can clip, the prayer of the humblest sinner rises to our Advocate.

Not only is it without loss of time, but we have an Advocate to apply to without labour. It is not now in Jerusalem the only place where sacrifices can be offered, where the high priest can be seen, and engaged to intercede and plead for us. It is not now on this mountain, nor on that mountain, that we have to pray. There are no deserts to cross, there are no distances to span, no broad seas between, but, without loss of time, without labour, without toil, everywhere and anywhere, on the ocean and on the land, in the height and in the depth,—if any man anywhere sin, we have an advocate everywhere to apply to, and he is the propitiation for our sins.

We have this Advocate to apply to without any intermediate party. You have not to ask a priest to introduce you, or to beg that he will use his patronage with your Advocate in your behalf. What a precious thought! The ground-work of Protestantism, that is, of Bible Christianity, is, that the sinner may approach the Father, through Christ Jesus, without asking the leave of priest, or presbyter, or prelate, or

pope, or any human being, or angel, saint, or cherubim. It is your privilege; and he that seizes his privilege most vigorously—acts upon it most instantly—is not guilty of the greatest presumption, but rather manifests the deepest humility. True humility is in doing what God bids us. If our most gracious Queen were to command the poorest and the humblest widow to step into her carriage with her, it would be true loyalty and true obedience instantly to accept the offer; and it would not be the truest and the noblest response to say, "I am not worthy." The King of kings bids you come to himself; true humility is to say, "Blessed Lord, to whom can we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

An advocate clearly implies a judge as well as a client; but this advocacy relates to a judge who is our Father. I have heard some one say, the Lord's Prayer, which begins with "Our Father," is not Christian enough: a more stupid or unscriptural opinion I cannot conceive it possible for human lips to express. The reason given for it is, because Christ's name does not occur in it. But who prayed it? Christ himself. When he first prayed it, he was the spokesman: when he knelt upon the streets of Jerusalem, with that frail group of twelve fishermen and publicans around him, and said, "Our Father," he presented in this the embodiment of my text. "If any man sin, we have"—and there he is—"an advocate with our Father" which art in heaven. Every time, therefore, that you say "Our Father," remember it implies the intermediation of our Advocate with Him.

But the second division is, "the propitiation for

our sins." This advocacy is so precious, because based upon a previous fact, namely, his propitiation. "We have an advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation." The advocacy within the veil is contingent, and based upon the propitiation without the gate. You remember the high priest first made atonement outside; then he brought some of the blood into the holy place; and amid much incense he interceded for the tribes of Israel. Our High Priest suffered, says the apostle, without the gate: he then passed into the true holy of holies, and there his advocacy is what John, in the Book of Revelation, called the "much incense" in the golden censer of the angel, or the Angel Lord, the Great High Priest. "Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense,"—that is, the advocacy rising from the atonement on Calvary, as the incense ascended from the sacrifice in the ancient economy, that he might offer it in this golden censer: the high priest alone having a golden censer, the other priests having silver ones. That incense, or advocacy, he offers with the prayers of all saints—that is, Christians—giving its perfume, its fragrance, its value, its acceptance, to every prayer that every Christian offers either in heaven or upon earth. Our High Priest, having suffered upon the altar, now stands with the golden censer. Having been our Atonement, he is now our Advocate with the Father. Because he is our Atonement, therefore the expression occurs, "Jesus Christ the *righteous*." Why righteous—why is this alluded to? Because it is in virtue of his being the Righteous One,—the Lord our Righteousness—that he stands

before the altar, and advocates our cause, and pleads for us. The word "propitiation" is not a very common word in the Bible, although analogous words are so. The word itself occurs in our English version in three parts:—Romans iii. 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" again, in 1 John iv. 10, "He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" and also in our text, "He is the propitiation for our sins." It is *ἱλαστήριον*, the word usually applied to the mercy-seat in the Temple and the Tabernacle of old; and it means, that just as that mercy-seat covered the two tables of the Law that were below it, muffling their thunders, and satisfying their exactions; and, secondly, as upon that mercy-seat there was an unearthly glory that was first kindled from heaven, and from which the fire on every altar, and the light in every lamp was kindled,—so is Christ to us. How remarkable, that all the lights and fires of the Temple of Israel were kindled from the celestial flame that was in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and that afterwards settled between the cherubim on the mercy-seat. Christ is our mercy-seat, to which we may go. The veil that kept Israel off from it is now rent. When Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent in twain; and now every Christian, being a priest, has access to the holy of holies, where Christ, our Advocate, is.

This propitiation was his atonement or his sacrifice for our sins. What he did upon the Cross on Calvary is the propitiation—what he does now in heaven is the advocacy that is built upon it. And I may explain still further, by stating that the Hebrew word

applied to "atonement," occurs, I should think, some hundred times in the Old Testament Scripture, corresponding to the Greek word here translated "propitiation." That Hebrew word is *Kaphar*, and what is very singular it is one of those Hebrew words which still occur in our language. We use the word "cover," which is derived from the Hebrew word *Kaphar*. Throughout the Levitical economy, and in the Book of Leviticus, it is the word constantly used for atonement—propitiation. It is employed by the Psalmist, when he says, "Blessed is the man whose iniquities are covered,"—that is, atoned for, expiated; and the idea evidently designed to be conveyed is this:—that just as a robe laid over an object conceals it from the outward gaze, so God will deal with them that believe on Jesus, as if all their sins were covered over with the spotless robe of his righteousness, and, in the language that he himself sanctions, he will see no iniquity in Jacob, and no perverseness in Israel. What a beautiful thought, that our sins are covered by the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness; so that a Christian shall stand before the judgment-seat, and be holy and happy, because he has washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and thus serves him day and night without ceasing!

Because Christ is our advocate with the Father, therefore the propitiation has been completed. You remember that the high priest only passed into the holy place to advocate after he had offered up the victim without; and it was a law, that, whilst the high priest was in the holy of holies pleading, no atonement of any sort must, or dare, be offered up without. What

an extinguisher is this to the view of the Tractarians and Romanists, with respect to the Lord's Supper—that it is a propitiatory sacrifice! Our Advocate is in the holy place pleading; and it is a law of his appointment that no sacrifice must be going on without—that is, upon earth. Then what have we to do? Not to make a sacrifice, but to plead one already made; not to offer an atonement, but to say, "We are satisfied with that atonement that God has given us." What is involved in the awful notion of offering up Christ upon the altar, as it is called, is the terrible thought that Christ is not enough for us; we must make another sacrifice of our own as well. My dear friends, we have a Sacrifice that needs not to be repeated; it was completed when Jesus cried, "It is finished!" and on the force of that he now offers up a ceaseless advocacy beside the throne.

He is the "propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." I think those that try to explain this by the supposition that this means, not for the Jews only, but also for the Gentiles, utterly misunderstand its meaning. Whatever the meaning be, that cannot be it. First, John was not writing to Jews, but to Christians; after the Jewish economy had ceased, when the Temple had gone, and all its glory had passed away. And, therefore, this is not the explanation of it. My idea is, that John wrote it to rebuke the particularism—if I may so phrase it—the bigotry, the exclusiveness of existing Christian churches, who believed that they had taken the place of the Jews, and that those within their own narrow limits alone could be saved. We believe, that this propitiation is available to the

greatest savage as well as to the most civilized. We do not assert that it is a propitiation accepted by all—this is a very different thing—nor a propitiation that all will accept, nor a propitiation that all will be forgiven by ; but, we do assert that it is a propitiation available to every man, of every degree, and of every stamp ; of every country, and every kindred, and every place upon earth: and if any man does not accept it, it is either because he does not know it, or because he will not accept of it when it is offered to him. We do not believe, as I have said before, that there is any decree driving men to hell. We do not believe in any man being driven to eternal misery in spite of himself. Nay, I do not believe that any man is going to perdition without his knowing it well enough. If I address any that are rejecters of this gospel, they know quite well that they are so—they know that it costs them the greatest trouble to keep down the remonstrances of conscience ; and I am persuaded that it gives a man a great deal more trouble and agony in order to go down to hell than it ever cost a saint to get to glory. How many sermons have you to quench, what reflections have you to keep out, what pangs of conscience have you to get rid of; what pleasures, what dissipations have you to follow, in order to kill time, that would otherwise be insufferable !

My dear friends, there is a Propitiation, the efficacy of which is sufficient for all—the offer of which is made to all. Why should any man reject it ? Is it something terrible to be a Christian—is it something sepulchral to be a child of God ? I believe that a true Christian can listen to sweet music with greater

ecstasy, can gaze upon the beautiful panoramas of the world with greater delight, can go forth and enjoy the bright morning sun, and retire at evening twilight with greater pleasure, than the man who is living without God, and without Christ, and without hope in the world. If to be a Christian meant to go and be a nun or a monk, I could understand people refusing to accept it ; this would be natural : but we do not ask you to renounce the world, but to be in it, and to have your hearts above it. A Christian may be a soldier, or he may be a sailor, a merchant, a tradesman, a lawyer, a physician ; and the man will best serve his Queen who most loves and serves his God. We may depend upon it that Christianity will make every relationship more beautiful ; it will make every duty more lightsome ; because, when there is within a heart at peace with God, all nature without will reflect peace and satisfaction on you.

CHAPTER V.

PEACE WITH GOD.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."—ROMANS v. 1.

You will remember that when I read the first chapter of the Book of Leviticus, descriptive of expiatory sacrifices, I addressed you upon the nature of the offering of Christ, his sacrifice once for all for the sins of them that believe. When we read the second chapter of Leviticus, descriptive of the meat-offerings that were to be presented by Israel, I showed that under our economy our true meat-offering is not what they presented, but ourselves. "We beseech you *by mercies* that ye present," not meat-offerings of corn, and bread, and oil, and wine, but "that ye present *your bodies* living sacrifices, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Having now read of the peace-offering, expressive of peace between God and Israel, I here select a text that is the summary of the chapter—"Therefore being justified by faith," in the expiatory offering finished eighteen centuries ago, we have now, not to present a peace-offering, but to taste the sweetness,

the joy, and the satisfaction of peace with God through Christ, the only atonement.

The blessing brought before us is peace, and the way by which it is enjoyed, is also described. This will lead me to show you what is the nature of true peace, in contradistinction to the mockery of it that prevails in the imagination, and sometimes in the convictions, of many.

Almost every chapter in the Bible is eloquent with the blessings of peace. If we look at Christendom, we should think that man came into the world especially desirous to fulfil the prophecy, "I am come not to send peace on the earth, but a sword;" but if we look into this blessed Book we shall see that the direct tendency of every truth, and doctrine, and promise, and precept, is glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will among mankind.

Wherever the tree of life appears in its congenial soil, the rich blossoms of joy, the precious fruits of peace, grow upon its branches over all the world: notwithstanding its storms, its clouds, and its controversies, there is breaking out day by day, in greater fulness, and in richer beauty, the covenant bow—the bow of promise and peace, to all mankind. How often does the Scripture speak of peace! "This man"—speaking of the Saviour—"shall be our peace." How beautiful that text. "Thou, O God, wilt keep in perfect peace the man"—not who is rich or who is great; not who is praised, not who is distinguished by his fellow-men—but "the man that trusteth in thee," or "whose mind is stayed on thee." Again, the Saviour says, "These things have I spoken to you that in me"—whatever you have in the world—"ye may

have peace." And, again, the apostle says, "Our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of *peace*." The very definition of Christianity—its distinctive and emphatic definition—is, "The kingdom of God is not meat, nor drink,"—nor is it clothing, I may add, nor is it Episcopacy, nor Presbyterianism, nor Congregationalism, nor fasting, nor feasting, but it is—oh! that we only felt it more to be so!—"righteousness, peace, joy, in the Holy Ghost." Now men who do not exhibit these graces in their lives, and feel their influence in their hearts,—may be Churchmen—it is easy to be so,—they may be Dissenters—it is easy to be that; but they are not Christians. The distinctive character of a Christian is, that his heart is the throne, and his bosom the home, of righteousness, and peace, and joy; and his life radiates upon the world the grand blessings that he has felt and tasted within him.

Now this text, "Justified by faith we have peace with God," gives us the root of peace, and the way in which it grows, the process by which it is to be implanted or infused into our hearts, and the exclusive and only condition of the obtainment of so great and so precious a blessing. It teaches us that peace grows only on truth. There is no such thing—and it is well for our own safety and comfort we should know it—as peace upon any tree indigenous to the earth; it is only to be gathered from the tree of truth. Truth and peace are both of them most desirable; but if it is necessary that I should part with one of them, then I would rather part with peace than with truth; because if true peace be the blossom, and truth the plant on which it blossoms, if

I part with the plant, next Spring there will be neither truth nor peace ; but if I part with the blossom—peace—and leave the plant in the soil, it will hear the sound of the footstep of returning Spring, and, under gentle suns and soft showers, it will bring forth fairer blossoms than it had before. The wisdom from above is first pure—that is, it is truth ; then it is peaceable. Better to keep from truthful controversy if we can avoid it ; but we should still less indulge in peaceable falsehood ; rather we must seek, what is freely offered to us all, peace,—the ceaseless and the fragrant blossom that grows on truth, a living and indestructible plant.

But before submitting to you the nature of this peace, let me notice some of its counterfeits. First, there prevails very widely among mankind what I may call the peace of ignorance—a peace that rises from ignorance, as *miasma* rises from the swamps, or neglected and untrodden deserts of the world. As long as a man is ignorant of the infinite purity of God, of the exactions of his holy and his uncompromising law, and of his own corrupt, fallen, depraved, and guilty nature, so long that man fears nothing, he is therefore troubled by no disquiet—he has, in its perfection, what the prophet calls “peace, peace, when there is no peace at all.” But such peace is the quiet of fallen nature, not the peace of the everlasting Gospel. The first ray of truth will disturb it—the first flash of the great white throne will scatter it like a cloud ; and it will be found that he that trusted on such a peace, leaned upon the pointed spear, that pierces to the quick the deepest him that leans upon it hardest. The peace that springs from ignorance is no peace at all. I can only account for the thought-

lessness of the great masses of mankind, with respect to the things that belong to their eternal peace, on the supposition that they are ignorant of the nature of God's law and holy character, and of their own fallen condition at the same time. If these three great facts were vividly impressed upon their hearts, the false peace would instantly be broken, and they would begin to look beyond for the peace that passeth understanding, that a stranger cannot intermeddle with.

But there are some men, in the second place, who have a peace that may be called the peace of formalism—that is to say, they have some slight views of what God is, some vague impressions of what their own guilt is; and, in order to get rid of any disquiet from these impressions of their own ruin, or any forebodings of penalty from God's character, they indulge with more than pharisaic precision in the forms they love, or the formalities of the communion to which they may belong. One repeats prayers nine times a-day; another counts beads; a third goes a long, a painful, and a weary pilgrimage; another goes to church as a duty, another goes to chapel as still more his duty; and another reads chapters of the Bible—it matters not whether it be catalogues of names, as in Numbers, or the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; he derives equal instruction and equal nutriment,—that is, none,—from either. And such persons fancy that when they have thus gone to church, and *said* their prayers, and read their chapter, they have done their duty; and having done their duty, they gather their mantle round them, indulge in the quiet but dreamy notion that now all is well, and they have peace with God. Such peace is absolute

delusion ; it is *a* peace, but it is not *the* peace ; it is an opiate that deadens the pain, but does not cure the disease ; it is a quiet that will last in sunny and in calm weather, but it will be rent to atoms by the first storm that beats upon it, and the issue be only more disastrous.

There is the peace of self-righteousness. And when I allude to this, do not misunderstand me. The most self-righteous people are not always the most righteous. On the contrary, we shall often find that the man rests most upon his own doings who has fewest doings to rest upon ; and that he is the most self-righteous who has the least personal righteousness to lay any stress upon. It seems a strange phenomenon, though not an unusual one, that the less that one has of moral worth, the more he seems to make of what he has ; so that no man is looking more intensely for heaven in virtue of his own deserving than he who has very little to lean on, either in heaven or on earth. You fancy, first of all, that God is not so severe ; and the language of Satan to Adam is echoed in your bosom—"Hath God said"—he knows it is all sham, it is all pretence ; you will not die, why should you be alarmed ? God is not so severe ; is his law so strict ? He will let it down to my convenience ; he will connive at my sins. My dear friends, if that were God's character I could have no confidence in him at all ; no confidence in the decree that condemns sin, no confidence in the law that will not inflict its penalties as well as give its rewards ; and if you could show me that your notion of God is a just one, my whole confidence in his government, in his law, in his promises,

in his words, would be literally gone for ever. But he will stand through everlasting ages to the aphorism he has substantially repeated in almost every page in the Bible—"The soul that sins shall die;" and he will stand eternally to the glorious truth that follows it—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." God will not dilute his law in order to save a world; he spared not his own Son in order to deliver a single soul. The peace that springs from self-righteousness, I have said, is an extremely subtle, but a no less false and destructive one. I have seen persons rejoicing in their attainments, believing that this is the evidence of grace; and I have seen others sorrowing that they had no attainments, and thinking this was the evidence of grace. Now the fact is, self-righteousness can laugh and sing when it exults in what it is, and self-righteousness can weep and cry that it has not something to exult in, or in which it can glory. So you will hear other persons say, "I am not satisfied with my faith; I fear I have very little faith; and I am not at all satisfied that my faith is true." My dear brother, if you were satisfied with your faith, that would be the very worst sign that your character develops. The question is not, are you satisfied with your faith; or satisfied with your attainments; but are you satisfied with Christ the Saviour? This is not the dispensation of "Well done, thou good and faithful servant;" this is the dispensation of struggle, of fear, of perplexity, often of grief; hereafter will be the time, for "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Another person will say, and think it is the evidence of the highest grace, "I do not grieve over

my sins as I ought." If you did grieve over your sins as you ought, you would be so delighted with yourself that you would trust in that very grief as the ground of your acceptance before God. What we are to glory in, what we are to be satisfied with—the richest glory that embosoms a ransomed and redeemed saint, is Christ alone, all our righteousness, all our salvation, and all our desire.

There is another peace which I must allude to—the peace that springs from feeling. You say, "I was at the communion table, and I felt so calm; I have prayed, and I have felt so much delight in it; I have read the Bible, and I have felt so much joy." Well, all this is right; these are proper feelings: but if you say, "Therefore I have peace," then you are turning holy feelings into grounds of trust and confidence. Our peace is to come, not from what we feel, nor from our tears, nor our smiles, nor from our experience, but from our being justified by faith in Christ Jesus; and therefore only we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The true peace that springs from the source I have pointed out—and the only source—has certain characteristics also. I may just notice here, as a preliminary remark, that you will find that a ripened saint, when he comes to a dying hour, looks less at what he is, and what he has done, and what he has been, than a very young or inexperienced Christian; because he has that clear view of the only Fountain of peace that he dare go nowhere else.

Rutherford, the celebrated Professor of Glasgow University,—whose letters are so beautiful, and whose piety and learning were so great,—when he came to

his death-bed, was asked what he could rely on ; and he said, " There is but one text in the Bible"—and recollect that this was a man illustrious for his spirituality : his life, his treasure, his heart was in heaven—" There is but one text in the Bible that I dare lay stress on ; and, blessed be God ! that text is so strong that I can trust mine eternal life on it—' Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.' " Justified by faith, Rutherford had thus peace with God through Jesus Christ.

But there is a true peace. What are the characteristics of it ? First, the peace that springs from justification by faith in Christ is a purely spiritual peace. I mean by this, it is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. Now to know whether any grace you have be really a divine and a true one, you may determine by this criterion :—Whatever peace, or joy, or any other emotion in our heart does not reflect Christ, and point to Christ as its author, and cast upon him all the glory of it, is not a true Christian grace. If it be implanted by the Holy Spirit, what will be its tendency ? " The Spirit shall take of the things of Christ, and show them unto you ;" and thus will glorify, not you, but Him. If, therefore, your peace be sacred, and the Holy Spirit be its author, the necessary result of that peace in your heart will be,— " I give all the praise, not to my prayers, not to my reading, not to my discharge of duty, not to my suffering evil for Christ's sake ; but as this peace is from Christ, to him I give the glory. It is a leaf from the tree of life, and he has all the praise, and he shall have all the honour." This is the evidence of true peace.

The peace of a Christian is an intelligent peace. It is not, as some people tell us, fanaticism, extravagance. It is not feeling separated from the Bible, or rambling impulse ; it is connected with a Divine source. When the Holy Spirit implants peace in a Christian's heart, he does it in connexion with his own Word. Any feeling that you have disunited from the Bible you ought to doubt the origin and nature of. The Spirit teaches the Bible—honours the Bible ; and whatever seems a grace in your heart, disunited from the outward inspired Word, you may doubt its origin, you may suspect its nature. But this peace is implanted by the Spirit through the knowledge of Him whom the Bible reveals—Christ crucified.

This peace, the true spiritual peace of the Christian, is perfect, complete. He is kept in perfect peace. But the most experienced Christian will say, “I have not always peace. How can it be perfect peace ?” I answer, Its ebbs and its flows are not changes in the peace, but the failing and the faltering of your grasp of it. The peace is perfect, but we possess it steadfast in our hearts in the ratio of the tenacity of our faith ; and when we have not perfect peace, it is not that Divine peace has failed, but that the faith that holds it on our part has faltered. God’s peace is in itself absolutely perfect ; but it is in our experience relatively imperfect. But when our peace is disturbed, our joys diluted, our sunshine clouded, we are not to say, “God’s mercies have failed,” but, My faith has faltered ; and, “therefore, I have not the full enjoyment of what I otherwise should have.”

This peace, as possessed by a Christian, is independent of all outward things. A Christian meets with

storm, and rain, and wind, and tempest, just like the rest of mankind. He has sickness in his frame, sorrows and ills in his home, bereavements in his family, like the rest of the world. The world draws its peace from things that are around it; therefore, when these things fail, its peace goes;—but a Christian draws his peace, not from things that are around him, but from the Fountain of peace that is above him; and, therefore, when the fig-tree ceases to give fruit, when there is no herd in the stall, when the vine yields no blossom, the Christian's source of peace remains inexhaustibly the same: he rejoices in the Lord, and joys in the God of his salvation. Draw your happiness from outward things, and you will find it the most precarious possession in the world; trust in your wealth, draw your peace from your home, your family, your friends—from any earthly cistern, and you stand in jeopardy every hour: but let your peace, your joy, your happiness, flow from the great Fountain that never fails, and then, though the earth be removed, though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea, though the waves thereof do roar, and though the hills shake with the swelling thereof, you have a river, whose streams ceaselessly flowing make glad the city of our God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not be moved. The Christian's peace is an inner grace, drawn from a heavenly source, unaffected by outer things, and, therefore, it ebbs not and flows not with them. The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of peace is quietness for ever.

A Christian's peace is permanent; it lasts for ever.

It is not overthrown by the things that shake the foundations of the world's peace. If subtle casuistry carps at his Bible, if powerful objections are launched against its distinctive tenets, if difficulties in the way of the acceptance of the truth are brought before him that he cannot solve, a Christian does not say, Therefore my hope, my peace, my joy, are all gone; but I am persuaded from the past that what I do know in the Bible is divine; and I am sure it will come out in the future, that what I do not know there is no less so: and he, therefore, waits until that time when what he knows not now he shall know hereafter. Many true Christians I have met with live in fear of some scientific discovery, or in alarm at some infidel objection, or in amazement at some new phenomenon; and foolishly enough they begin, not to doubt their own weakness, but to question their religion. Now, if you have a true apprehension of God's word, you will not be moved, whatever obstacles may be in the way of it. You must not think because you cannot answer an objection to the Bible that the objection is therefore unanswerable. A very important thought to be carried with us is, Because I cannot answer this objection it does not follow that it never has been answered, or that it cannot be answered. On the contrary, if you will wait a little, you will find that all things that seem to be obstructions to the truth, are becoming part and parcel of its glorious channel; and all those things that seem to be difficulties in the way of its acceptance, incapable of removal, are melted daily into its majestic current; and, from the depths of earth, and from the heights of

heaven, from all sciences, and all literature, and all researches, there is emerging every day, with more eloquent emphasis, "Thy word, O God, is truth." Let not, therefore, your peace be disturbed by objections or difficulties that you cannot now solve, but which have been solved, or can be solved, and will be solved hereafter. The peace of a Christian is permanent. It survives all—it outlives all; it grows like the oak, only stronger and more deeply rooted by the storms that beat upon it, until it is transplanted into that better rest where there is no more storm, nor trial.

Having seen, first, the brands of spurious peace, and, secondly, the characteristics of true and Christian peace, let me now allude, in the third place, to the ground of true peace—namely, "justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." To be justified, means simply to be acquitted. The apostle has explained it in previous chapters. To be justified, means to be acquitted from the consequences of the ill we have done, and to be admitted to the blessings and the happiness which, by our conduct, we have forfeited. "Justified by faith," says the apostle, "we have peace with God." But how justified? Jesus became our representative. I do not stop to explain how natural, or reasonable, or probable this is. It is the fact. Jesus became our representative; he omitted nothing that we owed—he committed nothing that was sinful. He bore our sins on his own body—paid and exhausted the penalty. He earned back the heaven we had lost by his righteousness, and, believing on him, we are justified. Adam sinned; we, his children, share in his guilt, and

are delivered to its consequences. Jesus bore Adam's sin ; and all the children of Adam that will flee to Christ, the second Adam, escape the consequences of that sin. Adam forfeited heaven by his want of original righteousness ; and we, Adam's children, have forfeited heaven also. Jesus regained heaven, by obeying the law that Adam could not obey ; and we, the children of the second Adam, believers in Christ, have restored to us the heaven we had forfeited for ever. Thus, justified by what Christ has done for us, not by anything done in us, we have, says the apostle, peace with God through Jesus Christ.

But he states here that we are justified by faith. What is meant by being justified by faith ? It is this. Faith, the distinctive grace of the Christian, lays hold upon that which Christ has done, and thus we are justified. The ground of my pardon at the judgment-seat is not faith, any more than it is works. I am not justified now by orthodoxy of belief, any more than I am justified by perfection of good works or good living. The old formula was, "Do and live ;" the formula now is, not "Believe and live," as if belief took the place of doing, and life were the consequence of either, but it is, "Do and live," and that formula is still obligatory. "Do and live ;" only when Adam heard it, he had to do the work, that he might get the wages. When Adam's lost family hear it, they have to receive the required righteousness already done by Christ for them, and thus they get the wages ; but, in either case, God demands a perfect righteousness, or conformity to his holy law, before he will give heaven to anybody. In Adam's case it was, "Do it

personally, and you will obtain it personally." In our case it is done for us, and, because done for us, not by us, we obtain the everlasting rest that remaineth for the people of God. The greatest faith is not a great salvation, and the least faith is not a little salvation. The greatest faith, that can remove mountains, has no more salvation than we need; and the least faith, that trembles on the verge of extinction, has no less salvation than we actually require. Faith, however, is not the bread; it is rather the mouth that eats it. It is not the brass serpent, but the eye that looks at it. When a poor beggar gets alms, it is not his hand that he thanks, but the donor; and when we exercise faith, or, in more common language, trust, or confidence in God, we exercise a grace that God gives;—for that faith is not our own, it is the gift of God; and we are saved, not by belief, but by what belief clings to—Christ's finished sacrifice. It is very important to understand this, because the world objects to evangelical religion, alleging that all that you want for heaven is a correct creed; and the worldling, unenlightened, looks for heaven, thinking all that he needs is a tolerably consistent life; whereas faith is not illumination in the head, it is not even law in the conscience, it is not even love in the heart, but the trust of the whole man on Christ, our only title to heaven, the King that governs us by the law in his own word; the prophet, that teaches us the way, the truth, and the life.

Is it true that we were at war with God? Many a benevolent and amiable man shrinks in horror from the idea that he ever was at war with God; but it is true of the most amiable as well as of the most wicked.

The natural heart, before it is regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God, is not only hostile to God, but it is enmity to God. The precise occurrence in providence may never have overtaken you that shall develop this latent enmity ; but God says it is there, and whether you feel it or not, you may depend upon it that it is so. Now then, he says, when we are justified by faith, persons that were at war with God shall have peace with him. But, how have we peace with God ? We find that instead of asking us to make an atonement which we never can, he invites us now to accept pardon of all the sins that are past. We find now that God is not a God hating us, hostile to us, ready to destroy us, as the natural man thinks ; but a God so loving us, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life. Now, the natural man's conviction, and I appeal to your own experience, is, that God is an angry being. Your notion of religion, the first notion you had, was that it was a very awful thing ; the Bible, a very gloomy thing ; and that the minister of the gospel was only fit to precede the dead to the grave. The notion that you were taught in the nursery, and that has grown up with you to manhood, is, that religion is a gloomy thing. And hence, the man whose countenance has glowed with joy when he spoke of his family, of his polities, of his wealth, of the world, falls into another key when the subject that comes up is religion. Why this ? My dear friends, if there be a joyful thing upon earth, it is religion. If there be a ground of thankfulness upon earth, it is the Bible. If there be a topic about which the heart should bound while it feels—if there be a subject which should be

spoken of in strains of praise, not in sepulchral and gloomy tones, it is religion. For what is it? God is my Father, heaven is my everlasting home; Christ, the Saviour of souls, is my Brother, my Priest, my King, my Prophet, my all; God, instead of waiting to destroy me, waits to bless me; instead of keeping me off, he bids me draw near; instead of my father's house having preparations to punish me, the prodigal, it has preparations for a joyous festival, because the lost is found, the dead is alive, the prodigal is come to himself, to his Father, and to his God. Therefore, being justified by the belief, by the faith, by the knowledge of this, I have peace with God. I have peace with God in his holy law. The moment I find that Christ obeyed it, that he bore the curse, and exhausted the penalty, I do not say any more, as the worldly man says, God's law is too severe; his exactions are too great; we never can do what he requires: I discover that God's law is holy, and just, and good, and true; and I am satisfied with its severest exactions, because I find that Christ has fulfilled it, and made it honourable for me.

I have peace with God as he is revealed in creation. The natural man thinks that the world now is just as God made it. This world is not now as God made it. No doubt the traces of his hand, the footprints of his presence, are many and beautiful; but the marks of irruptive and destructive elements are irresistibly plain on every side. God did not introduce autumn, decay, winter, plague, pestilence, war, famine, death. These are not God's children. God surely did not pronounce these to be very good, when he had finished this beautiful orb. You say, Why did he

permit them? That I cannot answer; but that he did not make them, and send them originally when he made the world, that the Bible does answer. But when the natural man looks at this world, thus covered with the traces of wrath, of sin, of disease, and of death, he becomes vexed and irritated. It is inexplicable to him; he cannot understand it, and comes naturally to the conclusion that the God that made it is a wrathful being. But when I discover Christ, the Saviour, the gift of His love; when I discover that the earth was made by God, holy, beautiful, and good; that God raised a cross upon it, and sent his Son to die there in order to restore it; and that my sin, not the fiat of God, introduced our woe, our diseases, our calamities, and our miseries, justified through Christ Jesus, my atonement, my righteousness, my all, I have peace with God, as he speaks from Sinai—peace with God as he rides upon the whirlwind or treads upon the sea—peace with God in creation, and in revelation also. I have also peace with God in all his providential dealings. The natural man, for instance, loses the property to-day he had accumulated by the labour of twenty years. If he sees God at all in the loss, he repines, and murmurs against him. The parent loses the babe that she loves, or the home is deprived of its chiefest ornament and glory. In that home there are loud, repining, murmuring complaints against the severity of God, who has nipped the blossom before it was blown, or blasted it after it was so. But a Christian reasons thus:—Not, God hates me because he has sent this suffering; but God is my Father, therefore this suffering must be working out the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The natural

man reasons, from what he suffers, upward to what God is. The Christian man reasons from what God is, down to the character of what he suffers. The natural man says, I am sick, I am poor, I am pained, I am dying, therefore God hates me. The Christian says, God is my Father, therefore sickness is chastisement, not punishment; losses and cares are not penal, but paternal; and all these things, because God is my Father, are working for good to me, his child.

I have peace with all mankind. The Christian pities the sins, prays for the souls, of those that are around him. He rejoices in their excellencies, and prays for their increase, in those that are Christians, along with himself. As much as lieth in him, he lives peaceably with all men.

Have we any experience of this peace? Have we got rid of the false peaces that, like opiates, lull, but do not remove the pain; and are we introduced into the true peace, the lustre of the shining star, that sets not for ever and ever? Are we deriving the peace that we feel in the prospect of death, in the prospect of a judgment-seat, in the prospect of the troubles that are coming in the world, not from something that we are, or anything we have done, but only from this—that Christ is our only Saviour, and that we are his redeemed and ransomed ones? If you have not this peace, pray for it. There is not a blessing that God refuses to prayer, and there is not a blessing that he has promised to give without it. I cannot explain why prayer should move the Arm that moves the universe. I only know that it is his ordinance; and his promise that if we ask the greatest things through Christ, we

shall obtain them. Pray, then, that he would justify you freely by his grace, that he would enable you to trust implicitly on the Saviour; and, so justified, and so trusting, to have that peace that passeth understanding, that will keep the heart and mind continually, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GROUND OF JOY.

'And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.'

ROMANS v. 11.

You must have noticed that, in the fourth chapter of Leviticus, there occurs frequently the expression, "to make an atonement," with the victim or the sacrifice that is offered by the priest on behalf of the sinner. For instance, in the twentieth verse, we read that the priest shall take it, "and make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them." Again, in the thirty-first verse, "And the priest shall burn it upon the altar, for a sweet savour unto the Lord : and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him." And in the last verse of the same chapter, "The priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him." You see, then, constantly repeated throughout this chapter, at the close of every sacrifice, offered according to the requirement of God, that the object of that offering or sacrifice was to make an atonement for sin, or, as it is otherwise rendered, an atonement for the sinner.

All this, as I have said before, was purely typical.

There is nothing in the sacrifice of a lamb or a bullock expiatory or atoning, any more than in the presenting of a few flowers, or the burning of a little incense. It was, however, the mode instituted by God to foreshadow, and to lead the beholder, in Levitical days, to the Atonement which should be made at the end of that dispensation, and it, having been finished on the cross, and having made an end of sin, we now can say, what the Jew could not say in the days of Levi, "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received that which was typified by all the atonements of Aaron, and which gave to those atonements their vitality and their virtue—the atonement made, once for all, for the sins of all that believe."

This word, "atonement," does not occur very frequently in the New Testament; it is often rendered by the expression, perfectly parallel in meaning, but different in form, sometimes translated "reconciliation." It is defined and well expressed by an apostle, the author of the Epistle to the Romans, who says, in 2 Corinthians v. 19, "to wit," explaining the atonement, telling you what it is, "to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself"—making the atonement for them—"not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation," or the message of the atonement. "Now, then," says the apostle, "we are"—what the priests of Levi were not, in a more full and precious sense—"ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"—that means, receive ye the

atonement ; for he says—this is the explanation of it —God hath made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, to bear our sins on his own body on the tree, that we might be made the righteousness of God by him. Thus we see the apostle explaining, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, the meaning of the expression, “atonement,” as used in his Epistle to the Romans. The original has been rendered by some into English, by the word supposed best to express its real meaning—**AT-ONE-MENT**, because it makes those who were at issue to be at one. They think that the word, instead of being pronounced by us “atonement,” ought to be more properly pronounced, “at-one-ment,” being that great truth which brings into unity those that sin had rent and severed for ever, and without which an earth all sin, and a God all holiness, never could have met—the one receiving glory, and the other receiving happiness.

The idea implied in the Atonement is, that there was separation between us and God that needed to be put an end to. This fact is expressed most plainly by God himself, when he says, “Your sins have separated between you and me.” Sin is essentially the rending element in the universe. It once split earth from heaven, and would keep it away from heaven for ever if it were not in love, and mercy, and grace, that Christ reunites the broken-off earth to the great continent of glory, of which it once formed a part, and from which sin, and sin alone, has rent and separated it. But, thus separated from God, we are brought to be at one by the Atonement. Man, however, could not make the atonement. He was the guilty party, without strength as well as without title and without

character ; and God, therefore, the offended party, who was under no obligation to do it, but merely from love and mercy, interposed a Great Sacrifice, by which we might be reinstated without doing injury to his law, his character, and his government. "Him hath God set forth to be the atonement, or the propitiation for our sins." He gave Christ, as an expression of his love, a satisfaction to his justice, and an atonement for our sins. And now, therefore, God, consistently with all he has said, and ever will say, and consistently with all he is, and must ever continue to be, can let forth upon the guilty those expressions of his love which belonged only to the pure, the unfallen, and the holy ; and receive sinners to his bosom, showing, in his reception of the sinner, at once his hatred to the sin and his love to the man, and covered with a richer glory when he does so, than if this earth had been cast into hell, and all its inhabitants destroyed for ever.

This atonement is called by the apostle here *the* atonement; in contradistinction to the numerous atonements made typically by Levi. We have received now, not an atonement needing to be repeated to-day and to-morrow, and incapable of taking away sin, because if it should do that it would not need to be repeated; nor does it teach that we have to make an atonement, or can make it ;—we receive what has been already made, perfect, complete, available for ever—the once-for-all sacrifice or atonement made for sins. In other words, the atonement predicted by prophets, promised by God, foreshadowed in the sacrifices of the Tabernacle and the Temple, anticipated by pious patriarchs, proclaimed by John the Baptist,

recorded by evangelists, preached by apostles, believed in by all true Christians, is the very life, and substance, and central truth of the Christian economy.

This atonement, it is said here, we have received. How have we received it? What does the apostle mean by that expression? The best and most precious medicine is of no value in disease unless it be taken as prescribed; the crown of a kingdom is worthless to me unless it be put in my possession; and the atonement may reconcile earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, but if I be not interested in it, for all practical purposes it is to me as if it never had been made, except that it may aggravate my condemnation that it was offered to me, and I refused and rejected it. Receiving the atonement is just believing what God says about it—laying the stress and trust of the soul, in its hopes of heaven and expectancy of glory, upon it; pleading with God, that we know he loves us, that he delights in mercy, and that now there is provided by his love, what was devised by his wisdom, a grand fact, a great economy—the atonement, by which he can be a just God, while he justifies the sinner, and spare me in spite of my sins, in accordance with his law, showing at once his reverence for law, and for his own glory also, when he forgives and pardons me, a sinner. To receive the atonement is, therefore, not to bring something to it, but to accept it as a ground on which God can forgive; to accept the delineation of it in the Bible as a truth that God has taught, and to deal with God, sinners though we be, as if we had what in Christ we do have, welcome access into his presence, notwithstanding our sins, and pardon for them whilst we obtain access to him, and confess their

nature, their aggravation, and their guilt. This is the whole secret of salvation—to treat God's word as truth, to act upon it, to take it as reality, to venture into the valley of the shadow of death, with no other trust but this, with no other hope but this, with no other plea at a judgment-seat but this, with no other hope of admission into heaven except what springs from this,—that Christ is the great Saviour, and I, the chiefest of sinners, can look to him, and lean on him as *my* Saviour. Thus we receive the atonement.

Now, says the apostle, the result of our receiving—that is, believing or trusting in the atonement made by Christ once for all, the antitype of all those recorded in Leviticus—is, that we joy in God. Have you ever noticed how frequently joy is spoken of in the Bible, not as the incidental possession of one, two, or three distinguished Christians, but as the ordinary level of Christian life and character? For instance, we read, “We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Again, “The God of all peace fill you with all joy in believing.” “The fruit of the Spirit is joy.” “Ye shall go out with joy.” “These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy may be full.” The apostle says, “Rejoice; and again I say, rejoice.” If we look to the precedents of illustrious Christians, we find joy to have been not their occasional but almost their ordinary possession. Anna said, “My heart rejoiceth in the Lord;” David said, “My soul shall rejoice in God;” Abraham saw Christ's day afar off, and leaped for joy; and the early Christians had such joy in their hearts that they took even joyfully the spoiling of their goods. And an apostle felt it to be so real, that he said, “Count it all joy when ye

fall into divers afflictions and tribulations." So that if the Bible describes what is really Christian character, if it be a portrait of Christian experience, there ought to be more joy in Christian hearts than generally is found there, more happiness in Christian experience than is often the case. The apostle does not say, we *may* rejoice, or occasionally we have rejoiced; but he lays it down as if it were the ordinary tone and feeling—"We joy in God through Christ Jesus, through whom we have received the atonement." The joy of the world is extremely evanescent, because it is fed from incidental, perishable and unsatisfactory things. The brightest joy that this world has, like Jonah's gourd, springs up in a night, and in a night it dies. It is an incidental, occasional, and always a perishable thing. I do not say it is sinful to rejoice in our friends, in our acquaintance, in our health, in our prosperity, in a beautiful day, in the bright sunshine, in the country, on the sea side; there is a joy that springs from these things perfectly moral, and therefore in its place truly proper. But there is a joy richer than all, which ought and which must supersede all,—the joy that we have in God through Jesus Christ, from what God is, from what he has given, from what he has promised, and from what we may expect when we enter into the joy of our Lord, and are admitted to his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Hence the joy of a Christian, described here by the apostle, is abundant. Our Lord says that he has taught us, and spoken to us, that our joy may be full. The joy of a Christian is heartfelt joy. It is not the joy of the senses, or the imagination, or the eye, or the ear, which is all that

can be said of natural joy; but it is the joy of the heart;—your hearts shall rejoice. And it is a joy, too, so deep and real, that, unlike earthly joys, it is not dependent on any shape or sense. If our water is drawn from a spring, that water is abundant or it fails according as the spring is; but when it is drawn from an inexhaustible source, it lasts for ever. The joys of this world evaporate, and are dried up when they are most wanted; but the joy of a Christian is very much like one of the springs that are found amid the Alpine glaciers—they are not frozen in winter; and in summer, when other springs are dried up, they flow fastest and yield the most abundant supply. So the Christian's joy, drawn from an inexhaustible source, is permanent, and outlives those things that extinguish the natural man's joy. Hence that beautiful passage, never too often quoted,—“Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” In other words, the prophet says, in a darker and cloudier dispensation, that the joy that he had was so deep, so cordial, so little dependent upon earthly springs, that when all those springs shall be dried up, and everything that he has shall disappear, he shall have left that which the world cannot take, as it could not give,—joy in the God of his salvation. The Psalmist said very beautifully,—“Oh send forth thy light and thy truth. Then will I go to the altar of God.” If he had stopped there, he would have been a mere ceremonialist, a tractarian, or a Romanist; but he

adds,—“I will go to the altar of God—to God my exceeding joy”—the altar, a step towards Him who was the end of the altar in that dispensation. A Christian joys, then, in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He joys in the Father, because he is his Father; we joy in Christ Jesus, says the apostle, as our Saviour; and we joy in the Holy Ghost, for the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We joy in his love that has come forth on its holy and beautiful embassy to save us; we joy in his holiness and justice, which, instead of being against us, as they would have been, if there had been no atonement, are now for us; for he is faithful and just to forgive us through Christ, the atonement. We joy in God’s providential government, because we feel that our Father not only made all, but rules all. And, whatever, therefore, betides a Christian, he believes to be a missionary from God; and that all things, however they feel or look at the moment, really and truly are working for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.

Thus a Christian joys in God’s character, as revealed in Christ; he joys in God’s providential government, feeling that nothing can separate him from God, and that all things, under God’s touch and impulse, work for his good, and directly, or indirectly, prove to us mercy, blessings, and benefits. He rejoices in God also, not only from what God is, but also from what God has done and will do. Because our sins are pardoned, for we have remission through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin, we joy in God, through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the

atonement. We joy in God, through Christ's atonement, because thereby the Holy Spirit is given to every true Christian to enlighten him, to sanctify him, to comfort him, and so to apply to his heart the joy of God, that that joy shall be to him actual.

We joy in God, through Christ's Atonement, because thereby death is destroyed; the sting of death is taken away. In a Christian's case death does not cease to have being; the soul of a believer parts from its earthly tenement just as does the soul of an unbeliever; but you know that the same outward fact may have very different aspects to different persons. The pillar of cloud and of fire, when it seemed all brightness to Israel, was all blackness to Egypt that was behind: and so death may be all blackness to the unconverted man, and yet all brightness to the Christian. The same outward fact, therefore, may present itself in different aspects to different men, according to the character and spiritual condition of these in the sight of a holy God. Now, to a Christian, death has lost his bitterest element. There is the pain of sickness, there is the agony of dying; but, in a Christian's conviction and experience, there is not in death the sting, because sin is pardoned and put away; and death, therefore, is but the uncoiling and the unwinding of life, the summons to the soul to leave its tenement of clay, and move to everlasting refreshment; to his body the repose in the dust till the resurrection morn, to his soul instant and blessed entrance into glory.

And we joy in God, through Christ's atonement, because thereby the way to heaven is revealed to us, —the future is also revealed to us. Eternity is not

now an undiscovered and an unknown land. If it were so, we should dread it. Man is prone to fear what he does not know. The thorough knowledge of a thing is almost alone sufficient to dissipate fear. Let the disease that attacks you, let the epidemic that overtakes you, be dreadful in its character as it may—the thorough comprehension of it is the dispersion of all fear about it. So, in reference to eternity ; as long as it is an unknown land, so long it is fearful ; but, when it is thrown open, irradiated by the Sun of Righteousness—when we see the land, that is afar off, lying in the light of the King whom we see in his beauty, to use the words of Isaiah, our fears are scattered, we perceive that it is our home, that our Elder Brother is there, that our nearest relatives wait to welcome us, and we strike the tent in the desert, and take our march to the better land, not as to a strange place and a foreign people, but to our home, where our Father, our friends, and our brethren are.

And lastly, we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, because we not only know what heaven is, but also the way to it. If any one should say, with Thomas of old, "Lord, show us the way,"—we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way ? —the answer to such is just what it was to Thomas ; and it ought to be as entire satisfaction to us as it was to him—"I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." By that atonement we have opened up to us that way ; and, therefore, an apostle says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,"—that is, the atonement—"by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us

through the veil,"—which he hath rent, and so laid open a heavenly and a better land,—“ which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. And having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.” Let us “ joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

Let us, therefore, regard Christianity not as a religion of gloom, but of joy; not as sepulchral in its aspect, and sorrowful in its tones, but as bright, radiant, full of hope, fitted to cheer, to animate, and to delight. The clouds of despair and darkness may still rest around Mount Sinai, but about the Cross all is brightness, because all is peace. Therefore, “ we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” And, if we ourselves have received it, we have tasted something of its joy, though we may constitutionally differ from each other. One man is more susceptible, more sensitive than another. One can weep when another cannot; we have different constitutional sympathies: yet if our joy be not an overflowing passion, it will be a steadfast, permanent principle. If it be not, as it is in some, bright sunshine, it will be, at least, plain daylight. If we be Christians, we must have some experience of, and some acquaintance with, that joy with which a stranger cannot intermeddle. If we have received this joy, let us seek to spread it. It is the law of good news that we cannot keep it to ourselves; if it be that which will benefit others, by a law of our nature we shall make it known. Have we learned

that there is an Atonement, that we may receive—not pay for, or toil for, but receive? Are we resting on it? If we are not, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, so freely offered, so available to all? If we have received it, let us tell others of it, directly or indirectly—by word, or by tract, or by Bible, or by life—in any way we like: but let us try, according to our means, or measure, or talent, or temperament, to let others know that Christianity is our happiness on earth, and the dawn, even before time closes, of that full joy which shines without a cloud, and without suspension, in the better land for ever and ever.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHRISTIAN OFFERING.

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—ROMANS xii. 1.

WE have seen, in the second chapter of Leviticus which we have read, the prescribed offerings that were to follow the propitiatory sacrifices. We have seen that these, in some degree, represented and set forth the spiritual and eucharistic sacrifices that all believers are to make. We have in this verse, in the prescriptions of the apostle, a definition and description of those sacrifices, as first and chiefest, the living man, surrendered to God that made and redeemed him, a living sacrifice, rational, intelligent, and spiritual; and this proclaimed to be now, in opposition to the offerings once given, an acceptable service to God.

You will notice, first of all, that the apostle does not enjoin this by the force of apostolical authority. He might have said, "I command you to do so;" he might have said, "Present your bodies;" but he does not do so. Every sacrifice, as we shall see by-and-by, must be voluntary. He therefore beseeches not commands,—"I beseech you by the mercies of God."

He speaks as a father to his children, as a friend to his friends, as a teacher to his pupils; ever feeling, what we need also to feel, that never is authority so impressive as when clothed in love; and never does a command so deeply strike the heart as when it comes from a heart that truly loves.

He beseeches them, not by the authority of Christ, though he might have done so; but "by the mercies of God." He takes his stand, not on Sinai, but on Calvary; he makes the fulcrum of his appeal not legal, but evangelical ground. He who thinks that God is an ever-exacting Master, will give him reluctant and very imperfect service; but he who looks upon God as exacting nothing, but giving all, will present to him his body a living sacrifice, his reasonable and his acceptable service. Think less of God as commanding, more of God as bestowing; and by a law that has its explanation in our nature, you will serve him most. It is not a slave that hears a tyrant commanding that gives him his best service; it is a son that listens to a father's request that yields the most beneficent and joyous offering.

But, it may be asked, what are these mercies? It is a singular fact, that the Hebrew word rendered so generally "mercy," has usually no singular number—it is generally in the plural; as if one could not have one mercy without having innumerable mercies in its train. But what is mercy? It is love in contact with sin. If there had been no sin, we never had known what mercy is. Love lights upon the unfallen; love, refracted into mercy, lights upon those who are the victims of sin. And how shall we enumerate God's mercies? Pardoning mercies, sanctifying mercies, pre-

serving mercies, comforting mercies, redeeming mercies : mercies in creation, mercies in providence, mercies in redemption. Who does not feel that all his paths, from infancy till now, have been paved with mercies; that the bitterest cup he has drank, in his bitterest moments, had in it sweeter mercies than he ever deserved ? Our mercies, if we had eyes to see, are like the stars of the sky in their number and in their brilliancy ; like the flowers of the earth in their fragrance and their beauty ; unexpected, often unasked, always and everywhere undeserved. That man is blind that cannot see his mercies ; he is insensible, indeed, who does not feel them ; and he will not be a long possessor of them, or long enjoy them, who does not give to God what he deserves--a tribute of thanksgiving and praise for his possession of them. I know not a more beautiful recapitulation of mercies than the very first hymn that we have often sung :—

“ When all Thy mercies, O my God,
 My rising soul surveys ;
Transported with the view, I'm lost
 In wonder, love, and praise.

“ Oh ! how shall words, with equal warmth,
 My gratitude declare ;
That glows within my ravish'd heart !
 But Thou canst read it there.

“ Thy providence my life sustain'd,
 And all my wants redress'd ;
When in the silent womb I lay,
 And hung upon the breast.

“ To all my weak complaints and cries,
 Thy mercy lent an ear,

Ere yet my feeble thoughts had learn'd
 To form themselves in prayer.

“ Unnumber'd comforts to my soul
 Thy tender care bestow'd,
 Before my infant heart conceived
 From whom those comforts flow'd.

“ When in the slippery paths of youth,
 With heedless steps, I ran;
 Thine arm, unseen, conveyed me safe,
 And led me up to man.

“ Through hidden dangers, toils, and deaths,
 It gently clear'd my way;
 And through the pleasing snares of vice,
 More to be fear'd than they.

“ When worn with sickness, oft hast thou
 With health renew'd my face;
 And, when in sins and sorrows sunk,
 Revived my soul with grace.

“ Thy bounteous hand with worldly bliss
 Hath made my cup run o'er;
 And, in a kind and faithful friend,
 Hath doubled all my store.

“ Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
 My daily thanks employ;
 Nor is the least a cheerful heart,
 That tastes these gifts with joy.”

“ I beseech you, therefore, by these, the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

But not only does Paul allude to the mercies of God, but he uses also a preposition of great significance. He says: “ I beseech you, *therefore*.” “ *Therefore*” is illative, or inferential: it denotes something that he had said before, on the ground of which he urges this duty. So that my text is what mathema-

ticians call "a corollary," drawn from a theorem, or a proposition previously established. But what has he been establishing here? He has been laying down all the doctrines of grace; and he argues that, because these truths are revealed and inspired by God, therefore, instead of living in disregard of all the moral duties of the law, you are constrained, by an impulse the more powerful, because it is grace, to present your bodies living sacrifices to God. What are the truths that Paul has previously established, not only with irresistible reasoning, but under the inspiration of the Spirit of God? In a previous part he has shown, that there is no condemnation in heaven or in earth, from law or Gospel, to them that are in Christ Jesus. He has shown, in the next place, that the righteousness of Christ is unto all, and upon all that believe; their only justification in God's sight. He has shown, in the next place, the election of God; that it is not of him that walketh, or of him that runneth, but of God. The previous chapter--the eleventh--of the Epistle to the Romans, is the strongest declaration of what we call the doctrine of election--what is sometimes called divine predestination, but which really is, when explained, what it is called more frequently in the Bible, the doctrine of grace, of sovereign grace. The common notion of persons that do not know the Gospel, is that God has predestinated some men to eternal hell, and other men to eternal heaven. That is not the language of the Bible. I have stated before my belief that God has predestinated nobody to hell. I do not believe that God drives any man to hell; I believe, on the contrary, that God has so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him may not perish, but have eternal life ; and if any are lost in everlasting ruin, the reason of their loss is not in God, but wholly in themselves. I have often quoted the passage, and it is one that needs to be often quoted, because important :—“ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom”—*inherit*, relationship—“ the kingdom prepared for *you*”—prepared for you—“ from the foundation of the world.” But how different is his language to the lost : “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting”—not “ Depart from me, *inherit*,” but “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”—not meant for you, not designed for you, not got ready for you, but prepared for the devil and his angels. The contrast between these two is most instructive : the one is, “ Come, ye blessed of my Father ;” the opposite is, not “ Depart, ye cursed of my Father,” but “ Depart, ye cursed.” “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit ;” the other is, “ Depart, ye cursed”—not “ inherit,” but “ Depart, ye cursed”—go on as you have been going ; go on in the course you have taken upon earth, and continue it for ever and for ever. The one is, “ inherit the kingdom”—the palace of kings and of priests ; the other is, “ everlasting fire”—everlasting, in spite of all the criticisms put upon the word. It is utterly impossible for any enlightened biblical scholar—with all respect for Professor Maurice—to come to any other conclusion than this : that if heaven be everlasting, and not a transient rest, hell is everlasting, and not a temporary purgatory. I cannot come to any other conclusion ; and I do think that the learned professor would have done far greater service

if, instead of trying to explain away the misery of the lost, he had tried to show how welcome, how free, how open to every soul under heaven, are all the glories and the privileges of the blessed. If any soul perish, the strength of our appeal is in this, that it perishes a suicide. There are none but suicides in hell—that is, men self-slain. I know the difficulty in believing this—I know how we ministers often put obstructions in your way, instead of making plain the path of the Lord, by metaphysical questions, whilst we ought simply to state, as the Bible plainly tells us, that there is no decree in the past, or in the present, between one soul and Christ Jesus this moment ; that there is nothing to prevent every sinner in this assembly—the oldest, the worst, and the vilest—from having perfect peace, through the blood of sprinkling, without money, and without price, and without delay, this very day. It is the very goodness of the offer that makes men think it too good to be true—it is the very simplicity of the Gospel that makes men hesitate to close with the glorious offers, and find, what they may now find—perfect peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are sure, however, that there is an election to heaven, or, in other words, we believe in the sovereignty of God's grace. Every soul that is saved feels that, before he came to God, God drew him to him ; that God spoke to him before he replied ; that the first impulse that leads him to heaven was communicated by God, often when he has sought it not, often when he expected it not, and always when he deserved it not. Well, grant me that God first draws me to follow him, without my wishing to do so first, and I

do not care whether you say that God purposed to do so millions of years ago, or whether he purposed to do so five minutes ago—it is all the same thing, because it is sovereign on God's part. Grant me, based on this, that I can deserve nothing, that I can purchase nothing, that I can do nothing, and that God must do all, or I am lost, and you withhold from me predestination or election as a word, but you have given me all that that word really contains.

Now the whole of the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is an unfolding of the doctrine of election. Some men would say, If we are elected to heaven, then we may live as we like. But the answer of the apostle is, Because you are chosen to heaven, *therefore* present your bodies living sacrifices, which is your reasonable service. Because you are not justified by anything you can do, because you are not sanctified by yourselves, but by the Spirit of God, therefore do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. In other words, the very truths which the world thinks open the floodgates of all licentiousness, are those which the apostle says constrain to whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are honest, and lovely, and of good report. And let me add, too, that election, as stated in the Bible, is neither stated as it is in the 17th Article of the Church of England, or as it is in our Confession of Faith. In both of these documents it is defined too much as a hard, dry, theological dogma. It is like a flower preserved between the leaves of a book—very beautiful, but very withered, and very dry. But in the Bible, it is presented in all its freshness, not as a mere dogma, but clothed

in the beauty and the interest of a living reality. The man whose heart is not changed by the Spirit of God, may talk about election as long as he will, but he talks about something he does not possess ; and the man who does not believe the truth may talk about predestination as long as he will, but he has no lot or interest in Christ's reconciliation. If you will take care that you elect Christ as your only Saviour,—we can guarantee you that he has elected you to be the heirs of his glory,—make yourselves sure of the lower evidence, and you need not be afraid of the higher result. Do not try to look into God's hidden book in heaven, to find your name there ; but look into God's revealed book upon earth, and see what your character is there ; and if you find that it agrees with what is there, you may be sure that your names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. It is a most precious and interesting truth, that all the doctrines of grace are represented by the apostle as leading,—not as the world would say, to the practice of evil, but to the practice and to the preference of what is good. "Therefore," he says—" therefore, because these truths have been revealed ; because you are chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world, because you are justified by his righteousness alone, because you are the sons of God, and if sons, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ ; because you are the inmates of the kingdom of heaven, therefore, on this very ground, "present your bodies, work out your salvation with fear and trembling." "It is God that worketh in you ;" but because God has thus vouchsafed his grace, and given you full, free, and irrevocable pardon through his own mercy

in Christ Jesus, present your bodies living sacrifices to God, "your bodies"—the language is Levitical: it is plainly Aaronitic and sacrificial. It is equivalent to saying, Present all you are, all that you have, all you possess, a living sacrifice, acceptable to God. And when the sacrifice was presented by an offerer of old, the very first idea of it was renunciation of all right to it; when he had laid it upon the altar he gave up the whole of his interest in it: it was transferred completely. And when you, therefore, present your bodies to God, you give up your own interest in them; you cease to care about them in the sense of carking care; you cease to be anxious to provide for them; you have committed them to God to be dedicated to his glory, to be taken care of in his providence, and when deposited in the dust to be watched over by his omnipresence, till fit to be companions for the glorified and immortal souls. Your feet are to walk in his ways, your hands to fight the good fight, your ears to listen to his word, your hearts to love him, your intellects to study his character; all your faculties, however gifted, to minister to him; all your affections, however dear, to cluster round his throne; whatever you are, and have, and feel, and enjoy, to be consecrated to Him who has redeemed you by his blood, and made you sons and heirs of his glory.

It was to be a voluntary offering. No sort of sacrifice in ancient days was of any worth unless it was voluntary. And you recollect when we read of the erection of the Tabernacle, how strongly it was insisted upon by Moses that every offering that was made should be purely a voluntary offering. And by

the teaching of the apostle, you are still to *present* your bodies. The spontaneity of the act is part of its essential excellence. Hand-work, however beautiful, never can take the place of heart-work. What you do, whether in word or in deed, you are to do all to the glory of the Lord.

But you are to present this body of yours, we are told, a living sacrifice. There were two kinds of sacrifices. First,—animal sacrifices, as recorded in the first chapter of Leviticus; these were expiatory, and are gone, now that Christ, the true sacrifice, is come. There were, secondly, -eucharistic sacrifices ; these are in the second chapter, and such are the sacrifices that we are now to offer to God. We have these very sacrifices noticed by inspiration itself Isaiah says,—“They shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord.” Here are men represented as an offering unto the Lord. And, in this very epistle—the Epistle to the Romans—the apostle tells us, in language exactly of the same kind, —“That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” Here you have the phrase applied to Gentiles--that is, to Christians. Therefore our bodies are to be presented to God, not as expiations for sins they have done, but as expressions of gratitude and devotedness to Him, who, by one Atonement, has forgiven all sins of the past, and who asks us now, by the mercies we have so richly received, to consecrate ourselves as ministers and servants unto him who loved us, and gave himself for us.

This offering of our body is represented by the

apostle here, as a living sacrifice. The Jew presented the slain victim as the shadow of the Great Expiation for his sins. In the peace-offering he presented bread, or flour, or corn, and oil, and frankincense, as the expressions of his gratitude to God. But we present a sacrifice, nobler than the Jews ; which, though infinitely distant from Christ's offering of himself, is, next to Christ's, the greatest that can be offered on the altar, or presented to God himself. The life that is offered, is life in its noblest development—the life of the individual heart ; a living dedication to Him who has redeemed it by his precious blood. And the apostle uses the word “body,” to denote that it is not merely a quiescent feeling, but active—the body, the exponent of the wants of the soul, the will of the heart, and the principles of the mind.

This sacrifice that we are to offer is called a holy one. You remember the victims selected for the altars of Aaron were to be without blemish, without spot. And the strict meaning of the word “holy,” I think I told you before, is properly *separated, sequestrated, set apart*. You have the word *holy* applied to profane things in the Bible, as you have it most generally applied to good, or pure, or noble things. And the reason is, that whatever is set apart is called in the Hebrew *kodosh*,—in the Greek *ayios*,—Latin *sacer*, holy, or sacred. We find the expression in a Latin poet, *auri sacra fames*—literally, “the sacred thirst of gold;” but properly it means, “the *accursed* thirst of gold;” showing us that the meaning of the word *sacer*, or “holy,” is simply that which is set apart for a specific purpose. When, therefore, we are told that our bodies are to be holy or sacred, it

separated from the subjugation of Satan, separated from the service of sin, disinfected of every earthly taint, and of every mortal alloy, presented in all their purity to God; so that to take that body and use it for sin, is the same as to desecrate the temple and profane the worship of the living and the true God. “Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?”

It is said in the next place, to be “acceptable unto God.” The sacrifice made by us of our bodies is said to be acceptable to God. There are many sacrifices that men make, which are not acceptable. They may be good, or they may be pure, but the sacrifices are not therefore acceptable. He that clothes himself in coarse raiment, lives in a hermitage, separated from the rest of mankind, eats coarse food, fasts all day, and prays all night—such a man is not presenting an acceptable sacrifice. He may do it from a pure motive and with a good intent; but the question that will be put to him, is,—“Who hath required this at thy hands?” When you ask the question,—“Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come as the Romanist? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old, with rams, and rivers of oil? Or shall I, like the heathen, give my first-born for the sin of my soul?”—however good your motives, however divine your end, yet all such things are blasted, because they are forbidden. “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” This is acceptable service to God.

Not only is it acceptable service, but it is called in the next place your *reasonable* service. The word *reasonable* conveys the idea of something that contrasts with the material and the carnal. It is not a service of beasts and of birds, of bread and of corn, but the offering of something that relates to the soul, or the mind; and, therefore, it contrasts with what is pompous, splendid, and magnificent. The acceptability of a sacrifice is not the splendour or riches of them that present it—it is not magnificent accompaniments of swinging censers, ascending frankincense—it is not gold and silver vessels,—altars on which are piled the riches of the earth,—these are no contributions to the excellency or the acceptability of the sacrifice;—it must be the sacrifice of the heart, the offering of the willing mind; the victim that God himself has enjoined: this only is acceptable to him.

Having seen the meaning of the text, let us next notice,—it is our duty to comply with the prescription of Paul. All you have is not your own, but God's. To him you owe the loyalty of subjects, the obedience of creatures, the praises and the acclamations of redeemed saints. This is the tax you owe to the King of kings; this the tribute he demands: it is your duty cheerfully to pay it. But, in the next place, it is your privilege. We have too much of Sinai in the disposition of us all. We are so prone to think upon what we must do, and what we ought to do, and so averse to consider what we may do, and what it is our privilege to do. Your question here ought not to be, Ought I to do this? but, May I do this? It is privilege that God permits you to worship him—it is privilege that he permits you to read his Holy

Word. We ought more to feel that we *may*, than to feel that we *must*. And to present this sacrifice to God is our interest; for it is not only reasonable—the most reasonable thing upon earth is Christianity, the most irrational thing under the sun is scepticism; your consciences respond to my words when they testify within you that it is reasonable, but it is right, we ought to do it, but our passions, our preferences, and our prejudices, will not let us do it; it is our interest to do it, for it is acceptable to God. Whatever he is pleased to accept, surely it is our interest to offer. And it is to be done, as I have said, in faith. We are not to think that anything, anywhere offered, is acceptable to God; but we are to offer what he prescribes on the altar—Christ—that he has appointed, to the glory of the name of Him who loved us, and gave himself for us. And when we think that we owe to God all we have as creatures, all we taste every day of his providential goodness, all we hope for as the purchase of atoning blood, do we not feel, with an emphasis which these things ought to impart, we are not our own, we are bought with a price—the precious blood of a Lamb? therefore, let us glorify God with our souls and our bodies, which are his; or, translated into my text, “Present your bodies living sacrifices, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” In one sense—and here lies the greatness of man, but a greatness that embosoms his noblest obligations—brethren, all things are yours—whether the learned Paul, or the eloquent Cephas, or life with its trials, or death with its fears, or things present with their anxieties, or things to come with their hopes—all these things are yours;

you are magnificent possessors, you have a great inheritance; but, we must add what inspiration adds, you, the inheritors of all these things, are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Therefore, glorify God with your souls and your bodies, which are his. All that you have is a trust; you are but trustees. Your money is not your own; your time, your health, your strength, are not your own. Whatever you have, you have as a trustee. What would you say of that man who should take the money entrusted to him, and lay it out upon himself—what would you say of that Christian who begins his prayer, “God be merciful to me, and bless me, that thy ways may be known upon earth—that I may be a missionary—that I may diffuse the knowledge of Christianity, or thy saving health among all nations;” but who spends it totally upon himself? I do not say that you are not to enjoy whatever God gives you in his good providence. We do not advocate macadamizing all society, and reducing it all to the same dead level. I think that would be most absurd. While each man lives in the sphere in which Providence has placed him, and by doing so, confers the greatest good upon society around him, yet the poorest and the richest together must know that they have more than they can use—that there are mouths to be filled, nakedness to be clothed, ignorance to be taught, the weak to be raised up, the bowed down to be upheld; and a large world around looking for him that hath to go and help them that have not. Let us, then, my dear friends, as thus redeemed of God, as having all things from him, present our bodies living sacrifices unto Him. Our lives are not our own. Never forget that we all think, because we have a

sort of personality in our experience, that our life is our own. But what is the fact? Your life—for a single day, of every day—is in your trust only. Men talk of the need of miracles! Why, every morning God gives you a new life; every beat of your heart is a new burst of life to you! The constant tendency of life is to go out—like a spark on the sea, like warmth in winter. And there are, in every part of that poor body of yours, ten thousand chemical laws ready, the instant life lets go its hold, to seize upon that body, and reduce it to a mass of corruption so loathsome, that the nearest and the dearest are compelled to bury it out of sight in the grave. And whose, then, is your life? God's! And, if we owe life to God, surely we ought to consecrate it to his service. I have often thought that we have in sleep something like a foretaste of what death is. I seem to have a sort of hold upon my life when I am awake; but when sleep begins to steal over me, I feel as if I were letting go my life, that I have no power over it, that some one above me must take care of it, or I shall never wake again. Thus, sleep is a shadow and a foretaste of the grave, and shows, to the strongest and the healthiest, that in God you live, and move, and speak, and walk, and have your being. Therefore, therefore—I repeat the illative particle of the apostle—present that body continually to God, a living sacrifice.

And, lastly, our souls are not our own. God gave them, God has redeemed them; and the way to find our souls in everlasting joy is the way of consecrating them now to God's service. Priests on earth, consecrating all we are to him, we shall be consecrated as priests and kings to God in heaven, worshipping

and praising him for ever. And those bodies that we have consecrated now, whilst the soul dwells in them, will one day be raised from the grave, where they must be deposited for a season; and the fallen shrine of humanity shall be rebuilt at the sound of the last trump, and be the home of a glorious, immortal, and happy inhabitant. Consecrated on the altar below, our bodies shall be crowned on the throne that is above. The direction we have taken upon earth shall not be arrested, but perpetuated hereafter; and committing soul and body, and all we are, with all our cares, our fears, our doubts, our difficulties, unto Him, who is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day, let us not doubt for a moment that the soul that he has washed in his blood, the instant it leaves its earthly tenement, is a worshipper beside his throne; and the dead dust that we lay beneath the green sod, and over which the grass grows for a season, shall every atom of it hear the last trump, and soul and body, widowed for a season, shall be wedded again for ever; and so we shall be no more priests, with stammering lips and trembling hands presenting these imperfect offerings below, but priests and kings, singing, in a strain that will ever swell and never cease, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto our God, to him be glory, and thanksgiving, and praise." Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT QUESTION.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and how myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—MICAH vi. 6—8.

GENERALLY speaking, the unconverted man has no anxiety on the subject of religion at all; or, if a feeling flits through his mind on his responsibility to God, and his prospect of appearance at the judgment-seat, it is transient, and dismissed or buried amid other thoughts as speedily as possible. The worldly man thinks of religion as a mere affair, cherished by a few, but for which the multitude have very little time, and about which they need feel very little concern. The feeling is, one man likes painting, another man likes poetry, another trade, and another religion; every one to his own taste; let every one follow his own pursuit. Religion is regarded as one amid many accomplishments; and the plea is, "It is not my taste; it may be yours: let us agree to differ." This is the common feeling. Anything more miserable one can

scarcely conceive; for religion, instead of being a subject numbered with the many for each to pursue according to his taste, or for others to reject according to their convictions or preferences, is that great truth that concerns every man, that affects every man, and that creates by its presence a load of responsibility inexhaustible on earth as his own immortality, and which will meet him at the judgment-day as a savour of life, or a savour of death.

When a step further is taken, and the thoughtless man is convinced that his soul is in peril, is satisfied that death does not end him, but only transfers him, and that by what he is on earth will be determined what he shall be for ever, then his first thought is to get rid of religion altogether; like the fool, he says in his heart, "No God;" like the ostrich before her pursuer, he hides his head in the earth, and hopes, because he does not see his peril, that there is none behind.

But when even this is found untenable, and a new, deeper, and more penetrating impression is produced; when he sees what God is, and feels what he himself is; and when all the opiates of the world will not deaden the feeling, and all the dissipation of life will not kill, conceal, or extirpate the thought; then he asks, almost in the agony of despair, "If this be so, wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" That is, in other words, the question, "What must I do to be saved? How shall I get salvation, and, through salvation, peace with God, peace with my own conscience, and with all mankind?"

The answer to that question is contained in the

sequel of this passage. It is obvious that acceptance is here described by the phrase, "come before God." "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" that is, how shall I be accepted of him? The thoughtless man says, "No God;" the Christian walks with God, lives before God, does all he does, thinks what he thinks, pursues what he pursues, under the eye of his Father and his God. The question, therefore, of the thoughtful man is, "How shall I come before this Being? I, clad with sin, before perfect purity—I, pressed down by my transgressions, before a holy and just God? Wherewith shall I be entitled to his presence, armed against his righteous judgments? what will constitute me the recipient of his sparing mercy, and embosom me in his everlasting and precious love?" Thus, the soul, awakened to a sense of its ruin, asks earnestly the question, "Wherewith shall I come before God?"

The first thought is, to take something that is within one's reach, and to offer that, if peradventure God will accept it. Hence the very first question, "Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings? Shall I renew the rites and ceremonies of Levi? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, if I had them? Would the sacrifice of so many lead to his forgiving sins, and accepting me as his child? Or shall I do what is desperate, almost impossible, certainly sinful,—slay my firstborn, and offer him for the sin of my soul?" My dear friends, when a person is under deep conviction of sin, there is no agony he will not endure, no sacrifice he will not make, no dear and cherished thing that he has, which he will not freely part with, if that agony can be laid, and the

sure and certain expectancy of happiness can only be made intelligible and clear to him, or the prospect of meeting God, a just God, and yet a Saviour.

The reason why such things are thought of is this, that God is seen high, holy, just, true ; that the sinner sees himself low, sinful, ruined, guilty ; and the difficulty that occurs to his mind is, How shall such a one be just with God ? He hears ringing still from the heights of Sinai, "The soul that sins shall die ;" in his own conscience the echoes of that sound are not yet laid ; and, under the feeling of self-condemnation within, and in the sight of a condemning God without, he asks in agony increased, but not lulled, "Wherewith shall I come before the High God ?" Is there anything on earth that will introduce me ? Is there anything upon earth that I can do that I may propitiate him ? He mentions all the sacrifices recorded here ; and the soul feels that they are all vain. No tears shed like the rains in April can wash away the least transgression ; no blood of victims slain upon a thousand altars can expiate a single sin ; no resolution for the future, no correction of conduct you can conceive, attempt, or accomplish, will be any compensation for the law you have broken, and the sins you have committed in the past ; and the very first discovery that the sinner makes after the proposal to give thousands of rams and rivers of oil, and the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul, is the fact that neither by these, nor by sacrifices, nor by offerings, nor by deeds of law, of any sort, or shape, or value, can a man be justified in the sight of God.

But the answer is given ; for never does the Holy Spirit propound a difficulty without indicating a solu-

tion of it. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good." This clause is quite distinct from the rest. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ;" that is, you need not ask, "How can I appear before God ?" any more ; for God has shown you. Then there follows a question quite distinct from this answer, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?"

It is said, "God hath showed thee, O man ;" that is, he has told you. How has he told you ? In types that foreshadowed the way ; in prophecies, the musical announcements of it ; in doctrines that clearly, distinctly, and unmistakeably describe it ; in sacraments that are the seals, the pledges, and the signs of it ; and in words which the wayfaring man cannot misunderstand. Or, it is, he hath shown thee this, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "In Christ, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "By him all are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." "Herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to die for us." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Therefore, cease to propose rivers of oil ; give up dreaming of rams, and the sacrifice of goats and bullocks upon earthly altars ; lay aside all idea of giving thy first-born for the sin of thy soul. There is nothing to be done ; it is finished. There is nothing to be sacri-

ficed ; the sacrifice has been made. There is nothing to be suffered ; the penalty has been paid. There is nothing to be given in exchange ; for Christ's righteousness, our title to heaven, is unto all and upon all that believe, for there is no difference. There is an end of penances, and tears, and mortifications, and pilgrimages, and fasts, and alms, as atoning or expiatory in any way, or shape, or degree. It is finished. There is a perfect Saviour, a perfect title, a perfect Sacrifice ; and as free to the poor as it is necessary to the rich ; for it is without money and without price. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good."

This is truly good ; it is the good news ; and if I were to translate it into New Testament language, I would render it thus, "He hath spoken to thee, O man, the Gospel." For what is the Gospel ? Good news. "He hath showed thee what is good"—told you the glad tidings of good. And oh, how good is it ! Suited to the sinner, for it descends into the deepest depth into which he has fallen. Suited to him, for it takes him as he is, in order to make him what he should be. It is good, for he has not to wait for it a single hour, nor to pay for it a single penny ; but just as he is, to go in Christ's name to God just as He is, and to taste the good things he has provided, and to hear the good news, and justified by faith thus to have peace with God—delivered from the greatest evil, raised into the greatest safety—transferred from "the Mount that might be touched, where was blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of words ; so that even Moses himself did exceedingly fear and quake," and brought to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to

an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." This is good. It is the good news, the good result—the one so joyous to the ear, the other so satisfying to the heart. And, as we hear it, are we not constrained to exclaim, what Micah says in another part of his prophecy, " If this be so, who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

And mark how good this is. When God thus pardons, he does not compromise his own character. The beauty of the Gospel, that which meets our difficulties, satisfies all our anxious fears, doubts, perplexities, misgivings, is this,—that when God thus justifies the guiltiest, he receives to himself the greatest glory. He does not become unjust that he may have mercy; but he is just while he justifies. When, therefore, you ask God to show you what is good by manifesting himself to you as the sin-pardoning God, you do not ask him to do a thing that is either difficult, or incompatible with his own character, or inconsistent with his own attributes; but you ask God to do that which he delights to do, to give forgiveness to the greatest sin, acceptance to the guiltiest sinner, that thereby he may derive glory to his name, and be manifested as a God to whom there is none in the heaven or in the

earth like ; who pardoneth sin, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. Such then is the answer to the question.

And now, what will be the character exhibited by those who have found and felt this thing in their own happy experience ? This is what they will do. They will " do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God." You will do all that God requires of you, not as the price of this, but as the evidence of your gratitude for it ; for he shows you the good thing first—he asks of you the good character next. He does not say, " Do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God, in order that you may reach the good thing ;" but by grace freely he tells you how you are pardoned, and he says, " Now, what I ask of you, not as a compensation, not as a reward, but as the instructive and joyous expression of your own most grateful and loving hearts, is, that you, my children, will go forth to a world that disowns me and dislikes you, and show them that freedom from the curse is not freedom from devotedness to God, and justice to man, and love to all mankind ; but that those who are freely pardoned are fully characterized by all the fruits that adorn the Christian character, win enemies to its acceptance, and give glory to Him who has done so much for them."

What then does He require ? First, that you will " do justly ;"—in the warehouse, in the shop, in the counting-house, wherever you are, that you will do justly. Do what is just. How beautiful is that ! There is joy in being just ; there is a satisfaction in doing what is honest. There need be, and there must be, no pride in it ; and yet, the consciousness that one

is doing what is right, is by a law lasting as the attributes of Deity, in its place, in its nature, and in its measure, a spring of satisfaction and delight.

And not only "doing justly," but "loving mercy,"—the recipients of so great mercy as that which God has shown going forth and displaying mercy, in their measure, and according to their means, among all mankind. Not imitating the servant who received great forgiveness from his lord, and then went to a fellow-servant, and said, with all the imperious exacting of tyrant from a slave, "Pay me that thou owest;" but showing mercy, where mercy can be exercised without violating the law, or injuring the duties that you owe to yourself, your family, and society. Thus let mercy be shown, and you will find that it will be twice blessed; like the gentle rain that drops from heaven, it will bless him that gives, and him that takes.

And not only "love mercy," but "walk humbly." No proud thoughts can lodge in that heart that feels that it was grace that forgave it; that forgiveness is not the reward of anything done by it, but the result wholly of something done for it. Wherever that feeling exists, and in proportion to the force with which it exists, will be that humility which looks upon others as better than oneself, and walks, like Noah, and Enoch, and Abraham, humbly before God.

Thus we see that our religion leads to true holiness, and that the man who has seen with greatest clearness, and felt in greatest power, God's goodness in the forgiveness of his sins through Jesus Christ, will manifest to the world the utmost amount of the Christian character, by doing justly, and loving mercy, and walking humbly with his God.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTIAN PRIESTS.

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

HEBREWS xiii. 15.

You will recollect, that after reading the seventh chapter of the Book of Leviticus, I noticed, what so much distinguishes that chapter,—the offerings of a eucharistic or thanksgiving nature, frequently and fully enjoined and elucidated throughout it; and I stated that these, under the ancient Levitical economy, were the modes appointed by God himself, by which the Jew expressed to that God his gratitude for those mercies which were showered down upon him; and that though the mode be altered under the Christian and the evangelical economy, yet the substance remains still obligatory upon us all. We, too, are to offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving as truly as the Jew, because we have mercies as many, as rich, as impressive, as his. These are not two antagonistic religions—the Levitical and the Evangelical; but the same religion, expressed in the one in one way, and expressed in the other in another—a simpler and more spiritual way. The Gospel is according to Levi, just as the Gospel is according to John. It is the same Gospel, expressed in types, and forms, and ceremonies,

many thousand years ago, but now brought clearly to light, and of which the grand and distinguishing characteristic is, "Neither on this mountain nor on that mountain, when ye worship the Father, but they that worship God should worship him in spirit and in truth,"—for such now God seeketh to worship him.

The Psalms of David have fully as often songs of praise as they have earnest supplications and petitions for mercy. One psalm is often a prayer for mercy and forgiveness, but the very next psalm is a song, a rich song of thankfulness for mercies and blessings received. The same lips that poured forth the fervent litany contained in Psalm LI. poured forth the brilliant and expressive song of thanksgiving contained in Psalm CIII. We shall find in the Psalms all the lights and shadows of Christian experience—the expressed want that is felt to-day, the joyous thankfulness that is sung to-morrow. Gratitude, or thanksgiving, is a virtue not altogether a stranger to the human heart. Even the great poet could teach, that to call a man unthankful was to brand him with the heaviest infamy. There is something even in the wreck of human nature that shows us, that to be thankful for a blessing is one of the simplest and first duties that devolve upon us after the receipt of it. We may thank the wrong object, we may thank imperfectly, but still wherever benefits are received, generally speaking, more or less of gratitude is felt. But when this feeling of gratitude is inspired by the Spirit of God, then it shoots far above all terrestrial objects, and finds its repose, its resting-place, and its object, only in the good, the munificent, the unwearied

Giver of every good and of every perfect gift. Now, according to the prescriptions of Leviticus, the Jew expressed his thankfulness by sacrifices most burdensome, most heavy, constituting a load that our fathers were unable to bear. But the same language is used by the Apostle Paul that Levi would have used, and explained by the apostle as a more spiritual and simple duty. Still we have an altar, still we have sacrifices, still we have priests, but of a very different description from those that are delineated in the Book of Leviticus, or instituted by God under the Jewish economy.

I have said we still have an Altar. The apostle tells us that. In this very chapter he says, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle; wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." The apostle plainly tells us, that Jesus is the Christian's altar; and to show that he is the altar, you have only to recollect that it was the altar's function to give to the sacrifice, or to the gift, all its virtue and its excellence. "It is the altar that sanctifieth the gift." And the apostle here speaks of priesthood and sacrifice, when he says, "By him"—that is, by Christ—"let us"—the priests—"offer the sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; giving thanks to the name of God." Then, when we offer our sacrifices, whatever they may be, we are to do so, not upon the golden altar of Levi, from which fragrant incense rose under the ancient economy in ascending and acceptable clouds to God; but by Him who is the antitype of the golden altar, who is not only the golden altar, but has the golden

censer ; on which, with the much incense of his intercession, the prayers of "all saints"—that is, all believers—are constantly presented and offered unto God. It is translated into other words by the apostle, when he says, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "Giving thanks always, for all things, unto God, even the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." To present the sacrifices of thanksgiving by Him, as the golden altar, or to present them in his name—the only name given among men whereby we can be saved—is all one and the same thing. His name cleaves a passage to the skies for the earnest petition, for the fervent praise. No man, however excellent, no prayer, however spiritual, no praise, however beautiful, cometh unto the Father, but by Christ, the altar, in the name of Christ the Mediator, through him in whose golden censer it is placed, and thus accepted of the Most High.

You will notice, too, that Jesus is not only the golden altar, but the brazen altar. The brazen altar was for the sacrifice of propitiatory victims ; the golden altar was for the ascending incense ; and what was offered on the golden altar was done after the offering on the brazen altar was presented without. Now, Christ was the altar of brass, in that he made thereon a perfect propitiation for the sins of all that believe, even to the end of the world ; and he is the golden altar inasmuch as all incense of praise and thanksgiving must be presented by him continually. The work of the altar of brass is finished : when he suffered without the gate he made an end of sin ; he finished transgression, he brought in everlasting righteousness. No atonement now can be made ; none is needed to be made. The

merits of that one atonement are inexhaustible whilst there is a sin to be forgiven, or a sinner among mankind to be saved. But there is still the work of the golden altar, or the offerings of praise and thanksgiving by him, as the apostle calls it, continually. And whenever, therefore, we present praise or thanksgiving to God, we are to do it in the name, or upon the altar, or by and through Christ Jesus; and God asks of us, not what he asked of the children of Israel—the herd of the stall, or the fruit of the vine, or the oil of the olive—but the glad thankfulness of a thankful heart; and he asks us to express it in the simple language of fervent praise. It is not enough to feel it; we must express it. It is not enough to be thankful; we must say so. It is not enough to pray with the heart, but we must, when we have opportunity, pray with the lip. It is not enough to praise with the heart, but we must, when we have opportunity, praise with the lip. The apostle adds, “The fruit of your lips.” Not simply the expression of the heart, which is the chief thing, but also the fruit of the lips, which will always follow wherever it is truly felt. That is, the apostle teaches us that the Christian religion is to be first a thing of the heart, but not only to be a thing of the heart,—it is to be first, a thing of the heart; it is to be secondly, as a necessary sequence, a thing of the lip and of the life. And, therefore, Christians in the congregation are to join in prayer and in praise; they ought by the bowed knee, or the open lip, to praise and pray to Him, who has promised to be present wherever he is pleased to record his holy name.

Having seen the altar, having seen also the sacri-

fices that we are to render, let me notice, in the next place, that all true Christians are hereby designated priests. "By him *offer* :" that is priestly language. But to whom does he speak ? He speaks to the Christian Jews—the laity—scattered through the whole Roman empire. In other words, he speaks to us believers in every age and every place of the world. And this language is only in keeping with the rest of the New Testament. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." Again, says John, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God." Therefore no minister of the Gospel is a priest in any other sense than that in which a layman is. There is no more priesthood among the Christian ministry than there is among the Christian laity. The humblest believer is as much a priest as the highest archbishop. One may differ from the other in this,—that the one is a pastor, an evangelist, a teacher, a bishop, a presbyter ; but they do not differ in that one is a priest, and the other is not. All Christians are priests, because all have the same sacrifices to offer,—namely, praise, thanksgiving, soul, body, and spirit, good works, beneficence. "To do good and to communicate forget not," "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." And the minister of the Gospel has no sacrifice to offer that a Christian layman has not to offer also. The Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice ; baptism is not a sacrifice ; a sermon is not a sacrifice ; and therefore he has no sacrifice to offer that a Christian has not to offer ; for all of us are equally enjoined to offer sacrifices that belong to all, and are peculiar to no

one class distinctively. All should thank God; and a layman is to do it as much as a minister; all should do good; all should present offerings — soul, body, and spirit, a living sacrifice. Therefore, all Christians are priests; and what a grandeur does it impart to the humblest offering, that it is as sacerdotal an act, as priestly an act, as beautiful before God as any victim that the priests of Levi ever slew, or that the patriarchs of the world ever presented on their early altars!

These sacrifices, says Paul, we are to offer to God continually. Now here the language contrasts with the Levitical. Under the Jewish economy there were stated days, stated hours, and stated places; under the Christian economy there is no place unclean; there is no day uncanonical; anywhere, everywhere, any time, always; when the heart feels grateful it can light up the incense of its offerings, the expressions of its thankfulness, to God that giveth. There is no spot in the earth on which you may not do so; there is no employment that is lawful in which you may not do so. As we have always wants, therefore we are to pray always. As we are receiving always blessings, therefore we are to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving continually. And he who feels most wants, and finds most supply from God, will always feel most gratitude, and express it most continually to God.

The language of the apostle is, in the next place, evidence that such offerings are acceptable to God. He would not bid us offer them if they were not so. The ancient Jew had the most entire conviction that when his priest presented for him the victim, on which he laid his hand, or the eucharistic offering, expressive

of his gratitude, the God of Abraham waited to accept it : and we may have as entire confidence as ever the Jew had, that the song of praise, however low, will reach the skies ; that the voice of prayer, however obscure, will pierce God's ear ; and that He that heard Abraham, and vouchsafed his answer to Levi, will equally hear, and answer, and bless us also. And when we think, my dear friends, of all that we have to be thankful for, we feel how appropriate on all occasions is the prescription, " Let us offer to Him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving continually." Our mercies are fresh every evening, and they are renewed every morning. The 103rd Psalm is a bright string of bright mercies, for which we should praise God. " He forgiveth our iniquities ; he healeth our diseases ; he redeemeth our life from destruction ; he crowneth us with loving-kindness, and with tender mercy ; he satisfieth our mouth with good things ; he executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed ; he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, plenteous in mercy ; he will not always chide ; he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him." " Therefore let us offer unto him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving continually—that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." And when we think of all the blessings that we have received in the past, we cannot too earnestly confess our sins, or too enthusiastically ap-

preciate our mercies. There are blessings of a temporal kind, that grow around God's footstool ; these are showered down upon us equally from on high ; and for these it becomes us also to praise him. By sin we have forfeited all ; and therefore the least pulse of a healthy heart, the least bread in your basket, is redemption mercy ; and for that we ought to thank and praise him. And there are what are called spiritual mercies, for which we should praise him—pardoning mercies, redeeming mercies, sanctifying mercies, adopting mercies ;—the gift of his Son ; the sending of the Holy Spirit ; the possession of a Bible in our own tongue ; freedom to read it ; liberty to speak out what we have read from it ; a place of worship ; means of grace ; hopes of glory ; some humble reason for believing that we have felt the force, and tasted the blessedness of these things. Are not these words of the apostle applicable to us ? “ Let us offer to him the sacrifice of praise continually ? ”

To show how natural gratitude is, or rather, how reasonable it is, let me notice, that to own our receipt of blessings that we have asked, is the least that we can do for them. Praising God, is just acknowledging to God the receipt of the blessings that we ask from God. It will not do to pray like Christians, and possess as if we were atheists. The sense of want that the Spirit inspires will always end in praise that the Father will accept.

And then, in the next place, this praise is the declaration with our spirit that God is the Fountain of all our blessings. We are sometimes apt to look at the gift, and to forget the Giver ; we are sometimes apt to trace our best blessings to secondary sources ;—

and no one doubts that there are secondary sources, or secondary causes. The minister who has been the means of enlightening you, you ought to be thankful to ; but your thankfulness should never rest with him, but rise far above him, and reach God. The physician whose skill has cured you of disease, is a secondary instrument ; thank him, but your thankfulness should rise far above him, and reach God. We are all prone enough to give the thanksgiving—that is, the sacrifice—to the secondary cause ; let us however look above it, and present the sacrifice of thanksgiving chiefly to God, and that continually. And you may depend upon it, he will not be a long possessor, or a glad possessor of great mercies, who is not a thankful possessor. Slighted mercies are always the sharpest judgments. Let us not then own our sins as some do, thinking they are far less than they are ; and let us not own our blessings, as some do, thinking they are far fewer than we deserve. Let us be humbled by a sense of our sins ; let us be thankful for the enjoyment of our mercies. Let both bring us to present sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God—that is, the fruit of our lips—by Christ Jesus continually.

But this language seems to relate specially to publicly doing so. You will observe the whole Epistle to the Hebrews is the exposition of temple rites, temple ceremony, temple sacrifices ; and being temple language it is of course descriptive of or allusive to public worship. Thus, therefore, he implies we are not only privately, not only in the family, but in the sanctuary by Christ Jesus, in whose name we meet, in whose name we are baptized, in whose name we are blessed, to present the sacrifice of praise and thanks-

giving to God continually, giving thanks to his name ; or, as it is in the margin, "confessing his name,"—not ashamed of it, not ashamed to proclaim it, boldly avowing whose we are, whom we serve, and to whom we feel indebted for the least crumb of bread, and for the brightest crown of glory.

CHAPTER X.

THE OBJECT AND END.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

GALATIANS iv. 4, 5.

You will at once perceive that the expressive statement I have read is an epitome of the birth, the life, the sorrow, the death and sacrifice, of the Son of God. It knits together in one the transactions of Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter; it tells us that He was born, that he redeemed us; and that by that redemption which he accomplished on the cross, we now, by his grace, receive the adoption of sons. Every clause in the verse I have read is most suggestive and instructive. The Great Personage here described is called the Son of God. "God sent forth his Son." His assumption to be the Son of God was to the Jews that heard the assumption, the evidence that he blasphemed. They said, "Art thou the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am." That does not mean, "You say so, whether I be so or not;" but it means, "You say that very thing which I am, namely, I am the Son of God." Well, what followed? They said, "What need we any

further witness? for we ourselves have heard out of his own mouth ;” or, as it is in a parallel statement, “ He is guilty of blasphemy.” Now, every Jew understood that the epithet, “ Son of God,” meant and conveyed essential Deity: they were the best judges of their own language; and if the assumption of that relationship had not conveyed the claim of essential Deity, then, when the Jews so understood it, and so understood Christ to assume to be, and if he had not been Deity he would instantly have explained to them, “ I am not God, and therefore I am not guilty of blasphemy; I do not pretend to be so, and your interpretation of the phrase is too strong.” But he never did so. If Jesus was a mere man, and in no sense God, then he imposed pretensions on mankind utterly irreconcilable with the pure and holy character he sustained throughout; but if he was God, then the expression, “ Son of God,” which he assumed for himself was only his asserting that which we can otherwise demonstrate—he is God over all, blessed for ever. So means also the expression, “ Though in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal to God, he took upon him the form of a servant.” Now ask the Unitarian interpreter what is meant by Christ taking the form of a servant; and he will answer, He became literally a servant, obedient to God. Very well; if, “ being in the form of a servant,” means that he was literally a servant, then the corresponding clause in the text, “ the form of God,” means also that he was literally God. It is impossible to escape from admitting that Christ was God any more than it is possible to escape from admitting that he was man. Prove to me that Christ was not God, and I will

prove to you, by stronger reasons, that he was not man. It is easier in the Gospel to find proofs of the Deity, if possible, than it is to find proofs of the very humanity of Jesus. He was the Son of God; in asserting that, he assumed for himself the attribute of Deity.

But I take the text before me in its successive steps. "God sent forth his Son." Well now, that alone would prove that Jesus was surely something more than man. If he was sent forth by God, then he had an existence previous to his birth in the inn, and his life as the Man of sorrows. He sent forth his Son.

That Son was "made of a woman." A true and real humanity; our sensibilities, our susceptibilities, our openness to joy, our liability to sorrow, to woe, to tears and suffering; all these Jesus became. We never for one moment refuse to believe that he was man; it is plain he was man, and perfectly, completely so—sin only excepted. But you say, We find all men sinners. But then that does not prove that sin is part of humanity. When you go into an hospital, you find men sufferers under some disease; but that does not imply that that disease is part and parcel of human nature. Sin was something that crept into human nature—a *miasma*; where it came from, how to explain its entrance, we know not; but this we know, that man was made holy and happy, and sin entered afterwards, and death by sin. So Jesus was perfect man. Now if he had been a sinner, he could not have been perfect man, but an imperfect, corrupt, and fallen man; and, being sinful himself, he could not have been sacrificed for us. But

man he was ; he wept, he rejoiced, he was hungry, he was thirsty, he was weary. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He was God manifest in the flesh. "God sent his Son, made of a woman." The contrast is remarkable. It may be said of you and me, *born* of a woman ; but the expression here is remarkable, *made* of a woman. Sent ;—here is a previous existence ; subsequently to his being sent, he was made of woman. This at least would demonstrate a previous existence.

Then at the next clause, "He was made under the law." Not the ceremonial law, but the moral law ; because Paul was writing to Gentiles : and the result of this redemption is, that we should receive the adoption of sons—a moral result accruing from Christ being under the moral law. In Paradise, when we were made, we were placed under the law. Obedience would have been perpetual peace with us and God ; disobedience the doom denounced upon it—the wages of sin, namely, death. Now Jesus became subject to the law just as Adam was, for he obeyed it, and earned its reward. Being a representative then of us, if he had faltered or fallen he would have lost himself, if that were possible, and we should have lost our restoration. Adam, placed under the law, broke it, and brought death into the world, and all our woe ; Christ, placed under the law, kept it, and brought righteousness into the world, and its everlasting reward. Adam in Paradise was made a representative personage : and we are fallen in him the instant we are born into a fallen world. Jesus came into the world a representative personage, and we that believe in him are justified by what he

did, and admitted to the heaven that we justly forfeited. Thus our restoration travels along the very line of our ruin; redemption is the unwinding of what the fall has wound up and done; and, therefore, as by the disobedience of our first representative head, who was human, all men are constituted sinners; so by the obedience of our second Adam, our second representative Head, all that believe on him, that are willing to accept of it, that will step out of the first Adam relationship, and come into the second Adam relationship, will be justified, acquitted, accepted, and saved.

I take a step further, as a proof of the essential deity of our Lord. If his calling himself the Son of God was proof of Deity, if his being sent and made of a woman is evidence of previous existence, I go a step further; and I say, that if I wish the most powerful proof that Jesus was God, I would just quote this incidental one—“made of a woman, made under the law.” All of us are by nature under the law. The very condition of creatureship is obedience to law. We are subjects of the Great Sovereign, creatures of the Great Creator, children of the same Father; and we are born under the law, to obey it; and if we disobey it, that is our ruin. But Christ was *made* under the law; and that expression, *made* under it, implies that he was originally not under it; and if not under law, he was originally above law. And who is above law? Only the Legislator, or the great Maker of Law. And therefore the very words, “made under the law,” are to me irresistible, and I think to every sound mind irrefragable proof, that if the apostle wrote by inspiration, and understood his own language, he taught in this pas-

sage that Jesus previously existed, that Jesus was above law, therefore the Maker of Law, the Legislator, or the Lord of law ; and that those who conclude that he was God over all, blessed for evermore, are not guilty of extravagance, do not pervert plain passages, but assert what is indisputable and demonstrable fact.

Now, I quote these incidental proofs of the deity of Jesus, not, in my humble judgment, that we need them ; for, take away that truth, and I do not think that Christianity would be glad tidings to all mankind. It seems to me that if all that the New Testament is, be merely a clear exhibition of God's law, it is not necessary. The Ten Commandments tell clearly enough what God demands, and our own consciences tell us plainly enough that we cannot keep them. And if, therefore, Christianity be merely a clearer unfolding of duty, greater encouragements to do it, I can only say it is a step a little in advance of Socrates and Plato ; I cannot see in it that which I want as a poor sinner. If I am in an hospital, I do not want to be taught to walk ; I want to be cured of my disease, and then instinctively I shall walk. I am sick ; I want a physician, not a model. I am a sinner ; I need not simply to be told what it is to do right, but I need to be informed how sin shall be pardoned ; not only to be told that it could be pardoned, but be so satisfied that God is holy, and just, and true while he pardons my sins, that I shall have confidence in his government, confidence in his promises, and believe that it is his glory to forgive as well as that it is possible that I can be forgiven.

And therefore says the apostle, he was made of a woman, made under the law, for what purpose ? "To

redeem them that were under the law." Not to be a model to us; not, he was made of a woman to teach us; not to show how a martyr can die: but he was made of a woman, made under the law, to receive redemption by a price, redemption through his blood; to bear my sins, that I might never bear them; to obey my law, that I, who have broken it, may not be condemned by it; to rescue me from the condemnation of sin, from the pollution of sin, and from the power of sin. He came an expiation, not a mere example; he died a victim, not a mere martyr. His sufferings were not for his own sins, but the iniquities of us all were laid upon him. He was wounded for our transgressions; the chastisement of our peace was upon him. What beautiful combinations there are in every passage that describes what Christ was! What evidences of his holiness, what lights revealing to us his grandeur, what proofs of the Sufferer, what proofs of the King of kings and Lord of lords! I think the whole biography of Christ in the Gospels is utterly inexplicable, except on the hypothesis that God was there, treading on the waters of the sea, hushing the fierce winds, quickening the dead, weeping, rejoicing, triumphing, doing miracles that were divine, and bearing burdens that were human—the presence of God manifest in the flesh. Grant that one truth—that Jesus was God in my nature, and the whole of the New Testament is luminous, harmonious, plain.

It noticing the character of Jesus—his remarkable and striking character—the agony that he endured in the garden—the sorrow that he felt everywhere, we see what intensity of feeling was always and everywhere in the character of Jesus. There was a simplicity, and yet

a solemnity, which indicated, even when he rejoiced in spirit, that it was but the ripple of the wave on the surface; the awful depths of his soul below were undisturbed in their great and holy calm. In reading his life, all must notice the intensity of his feelings. And one can see how natural this was. There are moments in everybody's history—what are called critical, it may be rare moments—when the whole future depends upon a step or a decision that you form that very day. And when the destinies of others, as well as our own, are contingent upon our decision, then the pressure becomes overwhelming, and decision is courted as the only possible relief. Jesus ever felt this intensity of feeling, because every word he spoke, every act he did, every thing he said or suffered, all involved and related to the glory of God, and the salvation of innumerable souls. If an individual man feels at one moment so intensely that decision in any shape is relief to his irrepressible feelings, how must Jesus have felt when, being a man just as we are, he felt the whole weight of the world, and the whole responsibility of the salvation of millions and millions contingent upon every decision, upon every step, upon every act of that wondrous biography! But more than that; when Adam, our representative, stood with the weight of our condition and destiny upon his shoulder, Adam was in a beautiful spot, breathing a balmy air, all things co-operating with him, nothing calculated to irritate, to exasperate, or to grieve him; but when Jesus came into our world to redeem us that were under the law, he came into a world fallen; the very men he came to save in that world shouted and cried, "Crucify him!" every thing to grieve him

was in it, nothing holy, beautiful, or good. He must, however, have felt, if I may apply such a phrase to him, the awful responsibility of being the Sacrifice—the Saviour, by what he was, and did, and said, and suffered, of unnumbered millions of mankind. But what is more, when Jesus came into this world to redeem us that were under the law, he was, in all he thought, and felt, and said, alone. We know that in a critical moment, when much may depend upon our decision, we call in a counsellor. Sympathy softens the bitterest sorrow, and lightens half of the heaviest load: and when it is a matter involving great difficulty, the advice of a friend, a judicious counsellor, how precious is it! But when Jesus came to redeem us, he was, in the most awful sense of the word, alone. He trod the wine-press alone; he had sympathy nowhere upon earth; he had advice nowhere, if he needed it, upon earth. At his death all forsook him and fled; at the solemn moment of the Supper they began to dispute which should be greatest and chiefest in the kingdom of heaven; he was, from first to last, alone; and the loneliness of his agony, even when in the midst of crowds, was part and parcel of the weight, and poignancy, and pressure of that cross which he had to bear. And not only was he alone, but he was accused by man, he was tempted by Satan in the hour of frailty and weakness; all elements against him; all hostile, none friendly. And yet, in spite of all, in the midst of all, he finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in everlasting righteousness; and by him, thus made under the law, made of a woman, frail, weak, sorrowful, suffering, we are redeemed as by his blood, and made kings and priests unto our

God,—and unto him for ever and for ever. Here, then, we have the good news of the Gospel—these are good news I am speaking to you this day, not as a teacher of what you should be, but as a preacher of a cure provided for you sinners. The very key-note of the glad music of the Gospel is, that He is come to seek and to save them that are lost—that he was made under the law, not to teach, not to present a model, but to redeem them that were under the law. The great peculiarity of Christianity is, that it is a remedial system; the pulpit is a place for prescriptions for the sick, the sinful, and the dying, not a desk for giving directions to them that are whole. The pulpit of a Unitarian is simply a desk from which he snows down cold directions to men, on the supposition that they are strong and able to walk to heaven. But the pulpit of them that believe in the deity of Christ is a place from which are scattered more beautiful, and ten thousand times more precious than from an earthly pharmacopoeia, prescriptions for the sick, the sinful, the dying, the chiefest of sinners, ensuring instant pardon and eternal peace through the blood of Him that was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem us, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Then behold what a dignity the incarnation of Christ confers on human nature. Beautiful thought! the Architect of this wondrous house of ours has taken up his residence in the midst of it; a fragment of my nature is glorified, and in the presence of Him who dwelleth in light inaccessible, and full of glory; and that portion of my humanity is there, not as a fact dead

and done with, but as a proof and pledge to me that the way is open to me to the same height, and that through that precious sacrifice of Jesus I can be raised and elevated too.

In the second place, what a sublime dispensation is the Gospel ; what strange antagonisms are concerned in it ; infinitude and finitude, eternity and time, weakness and omnipotence, life and death, God and man, heaven and earth ! These antagonisms welded in one, constitute the peculiarity of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Sin was a system of dislocation, of disruption, of fracture ; love in the Gospel is the grand system of union and of concord. This earth, which sin struck off from the great continent of heaven, and left a lonely isle upon the bosom of the desert sea, is, by Christ's redemption, re-attached to the great continent of heaven, and partakes again of its sunshine, its happiness, and its joy. He has redeemed it and us, that we may receive the adoption of sons, and earth be restored with all things.

How guilty, I ask, in the next place, are we if we neglect so great salvation ! Men perish not generally by rejecting the Gospel, but by neglecting it. I very much respect a sceptic who says, "I have examined all proof, investigated all history, read thoroughly the Bible, and I have formed the conviction that the Bible is not true." I think he is dreadfully misguided ; that he is terribly mistaken. I can barely conceive such a result possible ; and in past instances, such as Paine, and Voltaire, and Rousseau, most of them admitted they had never read the Bible, except some texts, that they might make merry with. But I say,

suppose it to be possible that a man comes to the conclusion of being a sceptic, after thorough investigation, I will respect such a man. I understand his position, I lament it, I deplore it, I think he is greatly misguided; yet I respect him: but I can scarcely respect the man who knows the Gospel, and neglects it; who has not the manliness to reject it, or the piety to accept it; but lives, with truths sounding in his ears enough to raise the dead, and to electrify them that are most insensible, and yet lives, and speaks, and talks as if no Christmas had ever shone upon our earth, and no agony and bloody sweat had ever been recorded in the annals of mankind. Well might an apostle say, "How shall we escape, if we"—not reject, but if we—"neglect so great salvation?" "For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorcer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

What a dignity is conferred upon the sorrows and the sufferings of Christ! Each tear cancelled a sin—each agony exhausted a curse. His sufferings were the sufferings of man, but made precious, infinitely precious, because the sufferings of God in our nature. And, in the next place, what ground of trust have we in the Gospel! When we rest upon this blessed Jesus as our Saviour, we do not rest upon an arm of

flesh. Though he was made of a woman, though he was made under the law, yet when we rest upon him, we do not rest upon a mere arm of flesh. I could trust my wealth to a man ; I could trust my name, my credit, my character to man ; I could trust anything I have in this world to man ; and there are men, who are not Christians, most honourable, most upright, most just, in whose hands I could place untold millions ; and this we ought to be, but that is not all. I say I can trust everything I have in this world to man ; but there is one thing I would not trust to the Queen upon the throne, I would not trust to the highest angel that is beside God's throne, and that is, my soul. I must have God to take care of my soul, or I will risk the experiment of taking care of it myself. If Christ were a mere man, I could not trust him with my soul. He might falter, he might fall. It is my all ; if it is gone, it is gone for ever—if it is lost, it is irretrievably lost. But I know in whom I have believed, and that He is able—there is the glad tidings—that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day.

Thus we have learned in the light of the New Testament, that Leviticus is not without its meaning, its object, and its mission. It is full of Christ. Its harmony and its glory are in Him. Many a humble Israelite learned from Levi what we learn more easily from Matthew, and John, and Paul—the way to heaven. Its dim lights disclosed the everlasting rest—the price of it, and the precious blood by which its heirs have been redeemed. The Jews lived in the grey and misty dawn,—we in noon-day. But the same

sun gives the morning twilight, who pours down the effulgence of noon. Ours is greater privilege. It is, therefore, greater responsibility. O Eternal and Blessed Spirit, who spake by the prophets, teach us, seal us, sanctify us !

CHAPTER XI.

LAST APPEAL.

"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

JOHN v. 40.

I STATED, in the course of my explanatory remarks on the instructive chapters of Leviticus I have read—for they are instructive in more than one great feature of the Christian economy—that the leprosy, there so graphically described, was, if left to itself, a fatal disease. It brought death to him who was its victim, unless means were interposed to neutralize its influence, and to arrest its effects. The fact is, all disease is more or less connected with death: it is supposed, by those most competent to pronounce on the subject, that there is no such fact on earth as perfect health; that the instant we are born, the curse, pronounced in Paradise, has its response in every nerve and member of our physical economy, and we begin, having eaten thereof, immediately to die. I stated, however, that all disease is evidence of sin. If there had been no sin to infect the world with its poison, and to project its dark and baneful shadow over an orb that once was beautiful and fair, there had been no aches, and ills, and sickness, and old age, and decay, and death. One disease, however, is singled out from the rest, and made the

great characteristic type of that inner universal disease, of which all outer maladies are the sad and sorrowing progeny. The great typical disease was that spoken of in the chapter, and it is the type of sin in the heart, the inner disease of all humanity. Now we were told, that, unless God himself cured the leper, there was no cure for him ; that, therefore, his going to the priest was to ascertain, Have I that disease or not ? If he had it not, he needed not to seek a cure ; but if the priest pronounced, from certain symptoms, that it was that disease, then it was the duty of the leper to detach himself from society, to go to God, the Great Healer, and to ask the cure of his disease from him. We do not need a Jewish priest, or any other priest, to tell us, that the great inward malady is in us all ; that sin has entered, circulates its poison through every vein, irritates every faculty of the soul and every affection of the heart with its poison ; and that unless we are healed by Him, pardoned by Him, our sins removed by Him who alone has power, and is willing to pronounce judicial absolution, we never can be healed, or pardoned, or forgiven at all. Hence, the grand prescription, applicable to all in this assembly, like a leaf that has fallen from the tree of life, legible also to all, is, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Come unto Him, the Physician that heals, the Sacrifice that atones, the Prophet that teacheth, and you will have everlasting life. And then the complaint that he is constrained to utter is, " Ye, notwithstanding you are conscious of this poison in you ; ye, notwithstanding you feel this moral malady is upon you ; ye, the victims of a disease that must drag you to everlasting ruin if not

arrested, cured, and healed, be astonished, O heavens, and wonder, O earth; ye, the victims of such a malady, will not come unto me, that you may get that which you can get nowhere else—life, health, and happiness for ever."

I have selected these words, then, after giving this introductory explanation of their connexion with the malady described in the chapter we have read, in order to meet, and, if possible, to obviate, difficulties, real or imaginary, felt by many in accepting the great prescription of the Gospel; namely, believe on Christ, come to him, rest upon him, and have everlasting life. Now, one of the most common excuses urged by persons to whom I address the solemn responsibilities under which they live, is that you admit yourself that the regeneration of the heart is an act of sovereignty. You admit yourself that man cannot turn, or convert, or change himself. How, then, can we believe in Christ, unless we get Divine power? And does not the impossibility of doing so suggest to us the duty of waiting till Christ is pleased to change the heart, and to enable us to believe in his holy name? Now, I admit at once, you cannot. But then I must distinguish. There are two *cannots*: there is the *cannot* which is, physically and strictly, "I cannot;" and there is a *cannot* which, translated into honest language, and as it sounds in the presence of the Almighty, is, "I will not." The question, therefore, is, whether your "*cannot*" is "*will not*"—physical or moral inability? That there are two such inabilitys is obvious from the language that we use. We say, "An honest man *cannot* steal." Why? Because he will not. We say, "A thief *cannot* steal." Why? Because he can get

nothing to lay his hand upon. The one, therefore, cannot steal, because he is utterly indisposed to dishonesty ; the other cannot steal, because he cannot get anything to lay his hand upon. So we say again, "The poor cannot give money at a collection," because they have none to give. We also say, "A miser cannot give," simply because, though he has plenty to give, he has not a heart to give. We see, therefore, a broad distinction between *cannot*, the result of physical inability, and *cannot*, as a mere "will not," or being willing to do so.

When I bid you believe on Christ, or, in the common language of Scripture, come to Christ—your answer is, "I cannot." Do you mean, then, that you have no capacity for salvation, or do you mean that you have no inclination to accept of salvation ? I answer at once, If you have no capacity for salvation—if you are utterly incapable of accepting the Gospel—then you have a most excellent and valid excuse, and there will be no punishment. If it really be a valid excuse, good, sincere, real, that you are incapable of being a Christian, you will never be condemned for not being a Christian. For instance, when a lunatic speaks profane language we do not think of blaming him, because he has lost the balance of his mental powers, or those mental powers are so disordered by disease, or the physical disorganization of them, that he is unable to regulate his own conduct, or to do that which is right. Duty always falls before a valid excuse. But is your excuse of this sort ? Is your "I cannot" of this sort ? Are you sure it does not imply, or conceal almost from yourself, the latent, but criminal resolution, "I will not believe, because

there is something that I love better than the service of God, the salvation of the soul, the hopes of glory?" Now, if it be the latter, if it really be the latter, that you will not, it is no excuse whatever. For a man to plead that he cannot do what God bids him, because he so loves sin, is outrageously absurd; it is to make sin an excuse for sinning, and to plead one crime as an apology for perpetrating another. But if your excuse be of the first sort that I have alluded to—namely, that you cannot, physically cannot, that is a very different excuse. I ask you, Why have you come to this conclusion? I press you closer, and I ask you, Why have you come to the conclusion that you cannot physically, mentally believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, come unto him, and be saved by him? If you say—and you say so far very justly—that we are all fallen creatures; that we suffer by Adam's sin; the taint of it, and disorganization of it, has overtaken us, and we are all conscious of it, and therefore we cannot believe; if you say so, I ask, Is your will extinguished with the rest of your mental and your material economy? Do you find it as matter of fact that Adam's sin has taken away your will? Do you never choose what you love in this world, and reject what you hate? Is not this proof of a will? Are you not, on the contrary, perfectly conscious that you do choose to do this thing, and you do choose not to do that thing? And if you choose to sin, it would be absurd to say that Adam's sin is to bear the blame, and that you, sinning from your own deliberate choice, are to be regarded as innocents on earth, and to be exculpated at the judgment-seat of Christ.

Let us therefore look at the whole of these objections, and see, if we possibly can, where the difficulty lies. Why is it that man will not come to Christ, or, translated into popular language, why is it that men will not become Christians; why is it that they will not take the way to heaven, and be holy and happy for ever and ever? I answer first, The difficulty is not on the part of God. You cannot say that God is opposed to your coming to heaven. You cannot show me a brand that he has affixed upon you. You are not conscious of weights that he has hung to your soul, that drag you necessarily downwards to the depths of perdition. You can see no obstruction that his hand has planted; you can hear no fiat that his lips pronounce. On the contrary, every page of his holy word leads you to believe that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.

In the second place, the difficulty cannot lie in Christ's atonement being insufficient. You cannot say his blood cleanseth from some sins, but not from all sin. You cannot say he is able to save a few, but that he is not able to save all that come to him, seeing that "he ever liveth to make intercession for them." His sacrifice is of infinite efficacy; and if there were millions of worlds that needed to share in its efficacy—when millions had been saved through it, its virtue would be inexhaustible still. You cannot, therefore, say that his righteousness is not enough to cover you, that his blood is not enough to cleanse you, that his death is not a sacrifice sufficient for you. You cannot, in the next place, say that Christ is unwilling to redeem you. Open the New Testament: what does

he say? "Come unto me, all that are weary and heavy laden." What is his complaint? "Ye will not come unto me." What is his invitation? "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

You cannot urge, in the next place, that the Holy Spirit of God is unwilling. He strove with the antediluvians, he strives with us. He inspired apostles to preach, evangelists to record the glad tidings that we now hear. And, therefore, whether I look to what God the Father has done, or to what Christ is doing, or to what the Holy Spirit has to do, I am constrained to conclude, that the obstruction, whatever that obstruction may be, is not upon the part of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

But is it, in the next place, in God's own word? Is the Bible so dim a lantern that it cannot light you on your way to heaven? Does it disclose the road that leads you to the Lamb so imperfectly that you stumble at every footstep? The very reverse is the fact. All the clouds of Scripture float in the upper realms, to which no human wing can soar; but all the sunshine of Scripture, with scarcely a cloud or a shadow upon it, is upon the lower levels, which it is our duty and privilege to tread. There are mysteries in the Sacred Volume so impenetrable that no genius has pierced them at any time; but the great truths that relate to our salvation are so plain, that critics may err, scholars may stumble, but the wayfaring man will not err when he looks into them.

Will you say that the obstruction to heaven and to happiness is in the greatness of your sins? That is no obstruction at all; because the answer to that is, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall

be white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." No man that hears the Gospel will be lost because of his sins ; the condemning sin will be that he rejected the remedy for them. The heathen may be judged by a law that they have broken, but they that hear the Gospel will be judged by their reception or rejection of the remedy provided. Now, your sins are not an obstruction to heaven : Christ's blood will wash them all away ; the Holy Spirit can give you grace to repent of and to renounce them. Well, then, what is your reason—what is your excuse ? Do you answer, " We have not power to know God, to love God, to believe on the Saviour, and to accept heaven ?" I ask, " Have you not understandings that can distinguish a sovereign from a shilling, a good shilling from a bad one ? Have you not hearts and affections that can love many things, and hate many things ? Have you not a conscience that still feels, and responds to a sense of responsibility ? Then what is the reason ? Is it, again I ask, want of capacity ? Are you utterly incapable of being made Christians ? If you have the incapacity which I have referred to, then the Gospel is no more addressed to you than it is to trees and stones, to the fishes of the deep, and to the cattle on the hills ; because you are incapable, you say, of being benefited by its grand provision. And if this be true, then God will punish with eternal misery infinite multitudes for not doing what they have no capacity to do ; and his tyranny will be as great as that of the Babylonian despot who punished with death the wise men that could not declare the dream that he himself had forgotten ; and the slothful servant that brought his talent in a

napkin unused, because he believed his master to be a hard man, reaping where he had not strewed, instead of being worthy of that retribution wherewith his conduct was visited, acted justly, honestly, and conscientiously. If God punishes for incapacity, then there is no such thing as mercy ; for mercy is deliverance from deserved punishment. But your punishment would not be deserved, and therefore mercy could not be exercised. And yet the law does not seem to show that it is want of capacity ; for what is its demand ? Nothing more reasonable. It does not say, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with an angel's fervour or with an archangel's force ;" but, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Now, I ask anyone in this assembly, Are you conscious, not that you have loved God as you thought his law demanded, but have you really loved him as much as you could ? No one in this assembly can say, "I have loved God as much as I could ;" but, "I know that I have neither loved God nor my neighbour as much as I could."

But what an idea would this give of the Gospel ! If man is utterly incapable of believing in the truths of the Gospel, of embracing the only Saviour of the guilty, and accepting that which is the way to heaven, and becoming a new creature by the influence of transforming grace, then God's justice enacts the penalty of eternal death on man who cannot do what God has commanded him to do ; and when he saw this to be the case, rather than that all humanity should perish he gave his Son a sacrifice, to rescue us from an unjust, an undeserved, and an iniquitous punishment. And when he has done so, he offers us salvation on terms of

which we are incapable,—namely, repentance and faith ; and threatens us with everlasting wrath for not doing what we are incapable of doing—believing in his testimony, and resting on his precious sacrifice, and entering into heaven through his blood, and through his merits. Now this would not be the good news ; this would not be a Gospel to us, but the very opposite to the Gospel. But when we open those parts of the Bible that allude to the triumphs, and the spread of this Gospel, we find very different portraits of it. For instance, it is stated by one apostle, that “not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” of God ; “but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” And our Lord says,—“I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” And do you not find it fact that a peasant becomes a Christian, and a philosopher remains a sceptic ? Do you not see many a man with a very humble mind become a true believer, and many a man with a very powerful intellect remain in atheistic infidelity ? What is the reason of this ? The reason is obvious ;—that if there be capacity in the humblest intellect there surely must be capacity in the highest ; and that if the weakest mind can believe and receive the truth, and rejoice in it, the most powerful intellect may not and dare not plead, “I am not a Christian, because I could not be so ;” and at the judgment-seat none shall be able to say, “I am not saved, because I could not be saved.” Every intimation about the judgment-seat leads us to conclude the opposite ; that the lost are

sunk to the depths of woe, just because they would not be saved, and that if any perish, they perish not because they cannot help their destiny or avert their doom, but because they loved sin more than its correlative ; they loved the way of the scoffers more than the way of the sons of God ; and every man in this assembly is perfectly conscious that the evil that he does is his own free, deliberate choice, and that the reason he is not a Christian is that he is shuffling with God, that he is trifling with his conscience, and that he will not entertain the question like an honest man, and look responsibility in the face ; and whenever the thought lives in his reason, and his responsibility comes near to his conscience, he goes to painting, to poetry, to music, to the world, to polities, to literature, to any or to every resource, in order to stave off the evil day, and then he follows up all with that most soothing opiate, "When I have a convenient season, I will take the whole subject into my serious consideration." You know that this is your own portrait ; you know that if you sketched it yourself you could not do it more exactly. The whole difficulty lies in the inclination. "Ye will not come to me." "Why will ye die?" "How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings!" and his answer is, "Ye will not." Your "I cannot be a Christian," translated into intelligible language, is, "I will not be a Christian." If you ask, Then what does the Holy Spirit do ; do you disregard, or *ignore* the great work of the Spirit of God ? I answer, Certainly not. No man ever entered into heaven who was not transformed and regenerated by God's Holy Spirit. But what does the Holy Spirit do ? He does not

destroy one man in order to construct another upon his ruins. As in the resurrection of the body, it is the same body that rises again, so in the religion of the soul, it is not another soul, another memory, another conscience, another imagination ; but it is the inspiration, the conversion, the expansion, the enlargement, the transformation, of all the faculties of the soul. The Spirit's great work is to make us willing. And what is the evidence of it ? " Work out your salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." He convinces of sin, he brings all things to your remembrance, he works within you to will and to do of his good pleasure. But do you say, " My heart is so depraved, so wicked, that I cannot believe ? " That is, simply translated into plainer language, " I am so bad that I do not desire to get better." The very wish to be a Christian is the first sound of that footfall that precedes your acceptance of the truth. The very desire to have a new heart, is the inspiration of God, that will unfold itself in the prayer, " Create in me a clean heart, O God ; renew a right spirit within me."

One refuge to which man retreats very often, is that he is a free agent. " I can repent, believe, and be a Christian when I like." The precedent for that is the precedent of one whose history and life do not give much encouragement to imitation. Felix said, " When I have a convenient season, I will send for thee." That convenient season never arrived. And when man is driven out of that refuge, he will then say, " Man can do nothing ; I had better therefore remain, rest on my oars till God is pleased to change my heart." Hell is paved with good intentions ; re-

member, duty is in the present, never in the future. God's command should have from you not an echo, but an answer; and that answer not to-morrow, but to-day; and he that puts off the duty that devolves upon him to-day till to-morrow, merely more courteously, but not less truly, says to God, "I will not obey thee."

And in the next place, when you say that "God must change the heart, therefore I need not do anything," I answer, God is a God of means. I admit he can work with means, or without means, or against means; but his great law is, that he works by means. If you say that you cannot change your heart, is there nothing that you can do? When you try to open the Bible, does anything shut it in spite of you? When you try to read the Bible, do your eyes instinctively close, and does the type convey no meaning? When you come to the house of God, does anyone snatch you away? When you listen to a sermon, does any thought come into your mind that you cannot quench by the volition to do so? Does any anxiety come in there that you cannot expel if you will only make the attempt to do so? Can you not pray? Can you not read books that will instruct you in the way to heaven? You know you can. When you have exhausted all that is within your own reach, and then feel that you are no nearer heaven than when first you began to inquire, it will be time enough to say, "I believe I am a hopeless reprobate, and that there is no possibility of being saved; and therefore I give up all for lost." But think one moment what is the drift of all I have been saying. All this seems to me almost a reproach upon the Gospel, and an insult to you. Why, what are the

difficulties I am combating? They must surely be imaginary. If the Gospel be indeed a penance, painful and laborious, that its recipient must endure; if this Gospel be a nauseous drug that you must take three, four, six, eight times a-day during all the remainder of your life hereafter,—then I might spend the force of argument, and endeavour by eloquent appeal to try to induce you to commence to take this nauseous drug. But surely, good news among men, glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, forgiveness for the greatest sin, welcome for the greatest sinner, regeneration for the hardest heart, and salvation for the oldest criminal that hears the Gospel, are joyous—oh! surely, it is an insult to your good sense to urge you to lay aside excuses for rejecting your happiness, for refusing to be happy, the sick for not going to a physician, the dying for not having life, the lost for not being found! One wonders that anyone hearing a Gospel that would electrify the lost, can for one moment need a persuasive to believe, to rejoice in, and be happy. Let me ask you again, what is this Gospel? Do you desire to see God in the aspect of a Father? Do you desire to see Him that made you, your Legislator and your King, not preparing punishment for his returning prodigal, but looking out if he can see the first sign of his shadow, or hear the first footfall of his approach, and the instant that he hears or sees one poor sinner running from his ruin, and seeking forgiveness and acceptance in the bosom of God, giving signal to all the choirs of the sky, who sing for joy, “One lost sheep is found—another dead one is alive—another poor prodigal has come to his home.” Or

do you desire to find the way to everlasting life, the way to everlasting joy? Where can you find it but in this blessed Gospel? Ask nature, and in all her oracles she is dumb; try it by Mount Sinai, and you may as well climb to the fixed stars as climb by it to heaven. The door of innocence is shut, the door of the law is impassable; but here announced upon the banks of the Jordan, and upon the streets of Jerusalem, a sound more musical than ever fell upon the listening ear of mankind, "I am the way; no man cometh to the Father but by me." Do you need a persuasive, do you need argument, and eloquent appeal to urge you to enter upon that way, to lay hold upon this Blessed Saviour, and to give utterance to the deepest feelings of your heart, "Lord, to whom can we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Or again, do you desire to have the forgiveness of your sins? Do you wish to know the only possibility of that—how shall sin be forgiven, how shall mine iniquities be pardoned? Ask any religion you like, and it can give you no answer. Ask the deist, and he hopes that you may obtain forgiveness, but he cannot assure you. Ask the unitarian, and he thinks God will be merciful, he hopes there will be mercy. God says he will forgive; but how he can be just and yet justify, he knows not. But ask the Bible, ask the evangelist, ask the Holy Spirit who inspired that evangelist to record that testimony; and he will tell you that in Christ God is just, whilst he justifies the very chiefest and worst of sinners. What a magnificent truth is that! Not, God is *merciful* to forgive us; we can easily understand that; but what a truth—

"God is *faithful and just* to forgive us our sins!" Such a statement is that of an inspired evangelist, or it is the wild hallucination of a lunatic. It can be nothing between the two. But "we know in whom we have believed." In Christ we have remission and forgiveness of sins. If then you are conscious you are sinners, and there is no one in this assembly that does not feel that; if you know that sin is misery on earth, and misery hereafter, when things seen and palpable have passed away; if you know the wages of sin is death; if you believe what the Bible tells you, that you are shut up in the prison of condemnation by nature, criminals, without God and without hope,—then, if freedom to the captive and health to the diseased need no urging; if food to the hungry needs not the accompaniment of persuasion to make him eat it, how is it possible that this good news, the chiefest Saviour for the chiefest sinner, needs arguing, persuasion, remonstrance, reasoning? One would think the difficulty would be to prevent all humanity rushing with lightning speed to the bosom of God, and having instant peace, and pardon, and acceptance. Oh! shall the fishermen forsake their nets, and the publican his receipt of custom, and royal ones their thrones, and philosophers their studies, and come and worship the Infant Jesus; and shall we go one to his farm, another to his merchandise, and another to his home, and all say, "We will send for him at a more convenient season?" My dear friends, the guilt that will ruin thousands is not that they have broken God's law, but that they have heard such a Gospel as this, and utterly despised it. And let me remind you

of that awful truth—I think the most awful in the New Testament—that rejecting is not such a sin as neglecting. I can respect the infidel who says, “I have examined the Bible”—he may have examined it very imperfectly—“and the conclusion I come to is, that the Bible is not true.” I can respect that man—he is most honest, he is most candid—whilst I bitterly deplore his misfortune. But when a man hears the Gospel, and puts down his own conclusions on what he has heard, and lives in contemptuous neglect, I can understand the force of that awful exclamation of an apostle, “How shall we escape;” not if we *reject*—that is bad enough—but “how shall we escape, if we *neglect* so great salvation?”

Now, I ask you, Have you ever spent as much time upon the investigation of the way to heaven, of the truth of Christianity, as you have spent in reading some ancient history, or deciphering some curious manuscript, or ascertaining the medical properties of a plant, or analyzing the crystals of a mineral? Are there not thousands upon thousands who, if they would only honestly and impartially reflect, would see that no time is regarded by them as too great to be expended upon scientific matters, and that minutes are thought to be most unworthy sacrifices when expended upon ascertaining if this be God’s Book, and if they be walking in the way that leads to heaven. Why, how can we answer for these things—how can we excuse ourselves at the judgment-seat? If this Bible be true, often has the infidel said, there are not half a dozen believers in it; if this Bible be false, it is not to be received with any intermediate treatment. I cannot accept Christianity as a piece of state policy; I

cannot accept the minister of the Gospel as one merely to keep the common people in order. I regard religion as the great instructress of the soul, the way to God, to heaven, and to happiness; and, if this book be not that, then it is the most awful blasphemy: it cannot be burned too soon. And what we are called upon to come to, is to one or other of these conclusions;—either put the book into the fire, speak manfully, say, “I do not believe in God, or in heaven, or in hell, or in the immortality of the soul.” I can understand that—that is most consistent; but anything between that, and vital, living, evangelical, thorough Protestant Christianity, I know not. There are but two grand consistencies in the world;—the man that musters hardihood to live, as live he may, in the freezing vacuum in which the soul cannot breathe and wing cannot soar, called Atheism, or the man that lives in the happy, the holy, the blessed hope, that God is his God, eternity his life hereafter, infinitude his home. There is nothing consistent between. Socinianism is a huge inconsistency, Tractarianism is a huge inconsistency, Deism is a huge inconsistency. Atheism is a consistency—the consistency of the polar iceberg it may be, but it is consistency—living Christianity is also a consistency; and between these two there is not a resting-place for the soles of your feet.

Or, on the other hand, do you desire your hearts to be renewed by God’s Holy Spirit,—do you wish to be made fit for heaven? Jesus appeals to you, and he says, “If ye, fathers and mothers, with all your faults, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the

Holy Spirit unto them that ask him?" One would think it would need no reasoning to make you pray, "O God, give me thy Holy Spirit." Or, do you desire to join, in the better land, the groups of them that have preceded you? Do you desire to mingle with cherubim and seraphim, and those that worship God in the upper sanctuary? How did they get there? There is not a soul in heaven that did not get there by one only process. One asks, "Who are these that I see in heaven clothed in white robes—who are they?" The answer is, "These are they that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night without ceasing." Now you can get there by the same process. There is but one word that is the password of heaven and earth; there is but one way that leads to glory, to honour, and to immortality,—and that is, Christ. It is his precious blood, it is trust in God's love manifested to us in and through Christ the Mediator, and applied to us by his holy and his blessed Spirit. You are in a world of trial. I speak to men of every section, sphere, and class, in our social superstructure; I speak to those that have aches, and ills, and cares, and bitter recollections; and, worse than bitter recollections, foreboding fears, and sorrows, and trials, the dim presentiments of which are all that they feel now. In such a world we need not only guidance, but comfort. Where will you go amidst the accumulating weaknesses of age, amidst the darkening of lights that once made your home all brightness; and the exhaustion of a fire that once made it all cheerful—where will you go for comfort? All the

cisterns of this world are broken cisterns. I cannot conceive how a man can have one moment's happiness or peace who lives to fifty, sixty, seventy, and sees son, daughter, brothers and sisters, and fathers and mothers, and friends, all swelling the dim procession to the grave, and knows not Christ. Where can that man's happiness be? If there be no meeting-place, no blessed reunion, no repairing of shattered groups, no completing of broken circles, no hope beyond the grave, no light of glory upon the pale face of the dead, then of all men we are most miserable, and a dog's life is better than that of a human being. But we need consolation, and, blessed be God! we know where it is to be found. And if, my dear friends, I bring you to that hour which comes to all, and that must also come to you, I ask, what then will be your comfort? You may depend upon it, when you lie down upon the last bed, and the quivering pulse gives evidence of the approaching severance, all the honours that could be snowed down from royal thrones, all the riches that could be piled around you in the largest coffers, you have no idea how poor, worthless, miserable, unsatisfactory they will seem to you in that hour, and during that agony: they can tell you best who have gone through it. Those things that you are now clutching at, those treasures you are now striving after, on a dying bed will be to you as wretched clay, and worthless, even more worthless than that. But if, on a dying bed, you know that the sun of your life, that sets in the darkening west, will rise, beautiful and glorious, in the everlasting east; if you feel that your death is but the officiating minister parting from the shattered temple in which it has

done service so long, and singing, as he emerges from the ruin, his happy and his blessed "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;" if you feel, as the Gospel teaches, that the day of your death is only your coming of age, and that your last breath makes you free of a glorious universe, what comfort, what peace! If this be true, what a glorious religion is the Gospel! If this book be true, and if what I am now stating be its fair, as it is its fair and impartial interpretation, then to a Christian there is no dying. I need not tell you that there is no such thing as universal night. When it is night upon this hemisphere, or on this side of the globe, it is bright daylight upon the other hemisphere. And there is no such thing as death. Your emergence from the shadows of time, the hemisphere of earth, is only your crossing the line, and entrance into the bright sunshine that lies perpetually upon the opposite side. There is no such thing as extinction or annihilation to a Christian. We think so; and, as I have often said to you, we dislike to die; and quite right. It is an instinct of my nature to live; and I believe the wish to die is a sinful wish—it is a suicidal wish. Our wish should be to live for ever; I have often said, we were never made nor meant to die. Sin has done that. But when I can look at death in the light of Christianity, I can see that just as my body is undergoing complete dissolution every seven years, and new particles taking the place of the old, so the grave will be but the last of its changes, and its last change will be there under Christ's presidency. How beautiful is the phrase, *a cemetery*, literally a sleeping-place!—the body calmly waiting for the resurrection

hour, whilst the soul, the man, myself, that which thinks, feels, lives, and loves, is ministering before the throne of God and of the Lamb for ever!

If this Gospel do contain such truths as these, must I urge them upon you, my dear friends? In the depths of his conscience every one in this assembly knows—and there is my strength,—that I am perfectly right. You do not need argument—your own hearts, your own consciences, are my witnesses; and between these truths and the conscience of man there is that perfect harmony which makes the inference irresistible, that the God who made my conscience, inspired this Gospel; and I speak to you words of soberness and truth when I bid you believe on Him, and remind you that there is no excuse that will stand a moment's investigation for not believing on Jesus, and so having life everlasting.

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